

**SERMON AND SURPRISE:
THE MEANING OF SCHEDULING
IN BROADCAST RADIO HISTORY**

- AND -

**CBC RADIO 3:
A DISQUIETING RADIO REVOLUTION**

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Victoria 1999
Bachelor of Arts, Simon Fraser University 2002

EXTENDED ESSAYS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the
School of Communication

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2006

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ABSTRACT

Essay 1: “Sermon & Surprise” explores the importance of scheduling to radio’s communicative uses. The essay argues that its capacity for continuous transmission and promotion of shared listening is unique to terrestrial radio. The strengths of traditional radio relative to contemporary on-demand audio media are explored. Early Canadian and British broadcasting policies and scheduling practices demonstrate how radio’s programming conceits may innovatively accommodate broadcasting philosophies in the public interest even today.

Key Words: Radio Broadcasting -- Social Aspects. Broadcasting Institutions. Broadcasting -- History -- Great Britain. Broadcasting -- History -- Canada. Radio Scheduling.

Essay 2: “CBC Radio 3: A Disquieting Radio Revolution” is a case study on the evolution of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s Radio 3, a radio and Internet service for younger audiences. It examines its policy origins and experimentation with multi-platform production and delivery methods. Supported by in-depth interviews with managers and producers detailing perceptions of institutional support and organizational competencies, the essay concludes with a critique of Radio 3’s entrenchment as a subscription service within Sirius satellite radio operations.

Key Words: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Broadcasting Policy -- Canada. CBC English Radio History. CBC Radio 3. Mass Media Research. Canadian Public Radio. Public Broadcasting -- Innovation. Satellite Radio.

You little box, held to me when escaping/ So that your valves should not break,/ Carried
from house to ship from ship to train,/ So that my enemies might go on talking to me/
Near my bed, to my pain/ The last thing at night, the first thing in the morning,/ Of their
victories and of my cares,/ Promise me not to go silent all of a sudden- Bertolt Brecht

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Neena Shahani, Monique Cloutier, Evelyn Hassen and Lucie Menkveld at the School of Communication for their thorough and considerate assistance throughout the years.

I am grateful to my supervisors, Catherine Murray and Alison Beale for their intellectual mentorship and enduring confidence in my work, as well as for their readiness to be surprised from time to time. I am certain that their dedication to Canadian communications policy and practice will inspire me for years to come. I also thank Robert Ouimet for being an incomparably informed and engaged examiner.

I thank Roman Onufrijchuk for his encouragement of all manner of interests, and Don Pennington at the CBC for his candour and insights into broadcasting histories. I thank Rob Prey, Paul Joseph, and Anne Middler for the countless conversations that have generated from a shared and inexhaustible preoccupation with radio and public broadcasting. I also thank the Pacific Cinémathèque for providing a space for genuinely contrapuntal flows of discussion.

The writing of this thesis was hastened by the discovery of Lee Henderson. His words, critical and heartfelt throughout, made the unimaginable, manageable.

The long process of my education, not least represented by the essays that follow, would not have been possible without my parents. Their patience and nurturance has been invaluable, and so it is to them that I dedicate this work.

Lastly, I am indebted to the varied ‘tinny voices’ which have accompanied this process: Glenn Gould’s note-wise humming and the late night ephemera of loud speaking telephones.

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**1:
SERMON AND SURPRISE:
THE MEANING OF SCHEDULING
IN BROADCAST RADIO HISTORY**

Introduction

Understanding Radio Scheduling

The communicative capacity of ‘radio’ has varied throughout its history and so, too, have imperatives of policy and regulation of the medium and its content. As Aberg (2002) maintains, “the most specific feature of radio delimiting radio from other forms of distribution, is that radio is sound – speech and music – organized into distinct, but from time to time changing, forms of expression” (Aberg 2002: 111). And yet, according to Truax (2001) radio’s expressiveness must adhere to a structure that is akin to a “predetermined mold” (Truax 2001: 181) whose purpose is to “hold the listener’s attention” (Truax 2001: 181). The organization of radio sounds and the context in which new forms of programming have evolved have depended upon both technical capacities *and* broadcasting philosophies aiming to balance distribution and duty.

In a most optimistic sense, chief amongst the missions of public broadcasters in Britain and Canada have been objectives to contribute to collective senses of identity through the facilitation of shared media experiences. Anderson and Curtin in ‘Writing Radio History’ (2002) reflect on the centripetal (McQuail 1994: 71) effects of mass media:

broadcast networks - whether devoted to the construction of citizens or consumers - not only made audiences possible by calling attention to the simultaneity of far-flung locales, they also helped to organize popular perceptions of space through daily, weekly, and seasonal broadcast schedules, and the distinction between national and local schedules. A fundamental social experience of individuals in the modern era involves imagining the distant presence of other citizens tuned into the same broadcast (Anderson and Curtin 2002: 26).

Various radio history studies have looked at the impact of technological innovations on listening, leisure or work habits (Douglas 2004; Hilmes 2001). What these studies share is a treatment of radio listening as a social activity, and that this listening takes place within the parameters of a broadcaster's organization of radio flows informs this essay. Scheduling practices, such as concepts of peak-hour or primetime broadcasting, anticipate and foreground audience behaviour. Changes in these programming schemes has, in different eras, been reflective of shifts in listening encounters made possible by new technologies of listening, viewing, and mobility.

In her extensive study of the policies and technical infrastructures which established Canadian radio, *Listening In: The First Decade of Canadian Broadcasting 1922-1932* (1992) Margaret Vipond affirms that "the continuity and regularity of programs, although rarely questioned, is in fact one of the ways in which radio presents to us a very unreal world" (Vipond 1992: 314). How items are scheduled within a broadcast day may build a sense of commonality bred through having tuned into a broadcast simultaneously as a member of a listening community. As Hujanen and Lowe detail in 'Broadcasting and Convergence: Rearticulating the Future Past', "broadcasting is a means of communication with broad audiences (...) This characteristic of being 'broad' is not only about size, but, significantly, also about the diversity of broadcast audiences. It emphasizes the ability of broadcasting to connect people across geographic, social and cultural borders in a public life that can be shared as a result" (Hujanen and Lowe 2003: 13).¹ It is in this sense that broadcasting - originally an agricultural term connoting the scattering of seed - encompasses the agora, that ideal, democratic space

which so many philosophers and social thinkers consider essential to public communication.

In Canada, the intent to infuse broadcasting as an instrument of national and social unity has been given special consideration in policy regulation around the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) mandate to enable shared listening and viewing experiences. This is deemed to be achieved through provisions of national access to programming via radio transmitters as well as in ensuring that programming is offered to all Canadians, as articulated in a 1974 license renewal submission by the CBC to the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC):

the national service can build unity by providing a daily pattern of shared program experiences at all levels. At its emotional peaks, that shared experience embraces the great events of our time (...) At a more pedestrian level, the balanced service...is made available to nearly all Canadians day in and day out. It is there, as a part of the common experience of being Canadian, to be participated in by all (McKay 1976: 132)

For most of public broadcasting's analog history in Canada and Britain, provisions for universal access, content pluralism and diversity were achieved through a mix of content on generalist channels or, indeed, a single public channel. In the new era, these analog services remain, though they are accompanied by digital technologies that provoke speculation on whether it is now time for new public service goals keyed to new kinds of audiences. Jakubowicz (2003) describes one possible model that metes out 'personalized public service', as "audiences move to the interactive, online, on-demand environment" (Jakubowicz 2003: 156). According to his argument, "public broadcasters will need to transform themselves into providers of individualized public service content" (Jakubowicz 2003: 156). The normative, quality of service dimensions which have long

informed conceptual frameworks of public service broadcasting are increasingly being re-evaluated for their relevance to an age of on-demand and individualized digital content production and distribution. In this post-broadcast era (Hartley 2002: 181), practices such as scheduling and program-building are very often characterized as inhibiting or delaying listeners' or users' *immediate* access to content.

Speaking in 2005, longtime CBC Radio and Television producer Marc Starowicz suggested the “end of linear time in broadcasting” (Starowicz 2005) and posited that the idea of scheduling has become archaic in media environments where individuals are able to upload and download programs at their leisure. Content assembling by media users, according to Starowicz, displaces the authority of networks to serve as gatekeepers or to maintain (commercial or public) media flows. Yet, in spite of these liberating characteristics of post-broadcast media, even Starowicz concedes the diminishing likelihood that niche audiences would regularly explore content beyond their expressed interests and lifestyle categories.

Significantly, Starowicz was among a consort of highly influential producers at CBC Radio during the mid 1960s that are still credited with having ‘saved’ the CBC’s radio services. As the original producer behind programs such as *As It Happens* and *The Sunday Edition*, Starowicz contributed to a reorganization (or, as it was then lauded, a radio ‘revolution’) of program formats and, critically, schedules that aimed to address changing uses of radio by Canadians. While subsequent reviews of that period (Carter 1999) have debunked the widely held belief that the costs of CBC Television services and declining radio ratings threatened the closure of CBC Radio services entirely, the fact remains that without a comprehensive review of its schedules, CBC Radio would have

been overwhelmingly eclipsed by television's popularity.² The introduction of block programming and news magazine or *boutique radio* formats, as heard on *Morningside* and *The Sunday Edition*, represented a response to television's dominance in peak listening hours previously dominated by radio. This response hinged on the ability of radio programmers and producers to exploit radio's temporal structure to suit its shifted position as secondary domestic entertainment medium. Put simply, in the terrestrial era of the 1960s and early 1970s, re-imagining content delivery was chiefly limited to a reconfiguration of content formats (notably open-line and phone-out techniques employed on programs such as *Cross Country Check-Up* and *As It Happens*) and their ordering rather than a technical revamp of delivery and reception methods. Listening communities were hailed by extended-length talk and information programs scheduled during morning and early evening periods – periods where radio listening was now at its highest. In the contemporary digital era described by Starowicz, it is the facility to release programs from the confines of daily and weekly scheduling that is exalted. While scheduling is still critical to terrestrial broadcasting, it is this shift to *compilation* that marks the service parameters of the digital age.

The Thesis

That radio content may be compiled in order to give rise to a host of integrative, normative goals is an increasingly important consideration in a post-broadcast environment. I am therefore interested in affirming terrestrial radio scheduling forms relative to so much popular rhetoric that purports over-the-air radio to be dead in an age of on-demand media. I argue that terrestrial radio's rhythms are intentionally time structured by broadcasting institutions in the form of radio flows and program-building.

These structures are, however, elastic and may be innovatively interpreted by broadcasters symbiotic to service goals. The intention of this essay is not to suggest that new audio production and distribution technologies have or will displace over-the-air radio. On the contrary, it is useful to acknowledge their relative radio-like forms in comparison to ways in which terrestrial radio unfolds over time. To this end, I am also concerned with radio's initial manifestation as a form of broadcasting capable of transmitting live or pre-recorded fare for immediate consumption (Crisell 2002: 285) and with questions of how the organization of radio programming in the public interest was innovated by the first public broadcasting institution, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Canadian and British Radio Histories

The expectation that broadcasters maintain regular programming is tied to broadcasting's technical capacity for continuous transmission. This requirement to fill time is indeed the rule that, above all else, stimulates programming production. The importance of continuity to radio's service capacity is appreciated through exploring the genesis of radio as a public utility.³ A look at the beginning years of Canadian radio elucidates reasons for the practice of programming being organized according to schemas of daily and weekly broadcasting time.

Throughout the 1920s, the Radio Branch of the Department of Marine and Fisheries was slow to recognize radio's cultural dimensions. In Canada, radio licenses were handed out in excess of available frequencies and limited bandwidth assured static interference wherever wavelengths were closer than 30 or 40 meters. A Radio Branch ban on simultaneous broadcasting - that is, the ability for two or more stations to broadcast

continuously and simultaneously on separate wavelengths - resulted in a policy requiring individual stations to co-ordinate hours on a single wavelength. While this policy aimed to appease radio manufacturers who maintained that listeners would resist purchasing the high-wattage models necessary for static-free reception, for many potential radio entrepreneurs the costs of radio's creative and technical infrastructure could not be justified by the promise of so little airtime. Significantly, the Branch failed to recognize the meaning of flow to audiences and to broadcast organizations (and their commercial sponsors).³

Unlike the point-to-point communications of wireless telephony, a system with which the Radio Branch was familiar, radio enabled continuous communication to listening publics. The craft of radio programming (and consequently the administration of radio policy) depended upon an understanding of how and why listeners could be aggregated around a mere "series of timed units" (Williams 1992: 82). Radio listeners are indeed nourished by much more than the actual content of programs. The ability to develop routines around daily or weekly radio listening – to allow attentiveness to flow - is duly important to the effectiveness of radio as a primary and secondary listening medium.

Continuous transmission also allowed for the extension of the cultural or educative goals of broadcasting institutions. Under its first Director-General, John Reith, BBC radio was concertedly {dis} organized to 'surprise' listeners so that the listener might be confronted with content they otherwise would not have sought out for themselves. Unquestionably, the BBC's initial monopoly of the single broadcast service in Great Britain afforded this strategy an unprecedented platform for experimentation.

However, my principal interest in detailing features of these early service models is to recall terrestrial radio's curatorial possibilities. Repertoires of listening, for instance 'tap', 'appointment' or 'graduated' listening may be anticipated by programmers aware of both the varied uses of radio by listeners throughout the day, as well as the varied objectives of types of programs.

The BBC's eventual standardization of programming schedules and its evolution into separate networks targeted at different types of listeners under the helm of Director-General William Haley signalled a re-imagining of both the BBC's service goals as well as radio's communicative abilities. Haley's innovative Third network, or as it is known in Britain, the Third Program, targeted serious radio listeners through its programming of extended length plays, lectures and musical performances. The Third was unique as it represented an attempt to breach the standardization that was, by the mid-1940s, considered essential to radio. The freedom it offered to musicians, dramatists, performers and programmers frustrated with radio's fixed time structures is, in many ways, comparable to the promise Internet radio has for contemporary media users.

Shared Time? Dynamics of On-demand Radio

While media users have, for some time, been able to time-shift content and select from a range of narrowcasting channels, including specialty pay channels, digital delivery of pre-selected segments delimited from an organized flow of programming marks a disruption to how broadcasting has traditionally been understood. In *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (2002), Crisell predicts that broadcasting has entered a phase in its development in which the temporal audio and visual elements so long arrested by over-the-air radio and television have been reconstituted by technologies

privileging sequencing, portability and a range of on-demand features. For Crisell, this new phase of broadcasting is noted by the ability of broadcaster and consumer alike to circumvent confines of terrestrial broadcast *scheduling*:

as well as transmitting live and/or pre-recorded material which is instantaneously received and consumed by a mass audience, or which its members can store for later consumption {via home recording}, the broadcaster holds material which can be *accessed at different times (...)* by *individuals* or *small sections of the audience* for consumption either at home at the time of reception or at times which suit them (Crisell 2002: 286).

It is estimated that there currently exist 100,000 radio stations on the Internet (Red Herring 2005). Many of these services are extensions of existing terrestrial organizations and accordingly stream or simulcast programs normally produced for placement within daily broadcast schedules. There are, of course, numerous other radiocasting sites demarcated from broadcasting institutions or commercial media that provide appreciably more flexible contexts for practices of sound text creation. Sites such as <http://kunstradio.at> or <http://www.transom.org>, for example, are platforms for radio documentary and acoustic arts.⁴ Audio content on these sites may be created with radio airplay in mind, although their auditory or storytelling experimentations are difficult - sometimes intentionally - to adapt to format and time structures of terrestrial radio. Significantly, creation of these texts suggests postures of focused listening that, for the most part, are no longer associated with radio listening. Regarding new post-broadcast audio technologies of the Internet more broadly, the intentional selection of particular programs allows users to belie broadcasting time through bypassing undesired components of a station's regular programming. In many ways, then, Internet radio may be said to retrieve 'appointment' listening. As Tod Maffin, a national CBC Radio

producer suggests, “instead of me listening to a single radio station for an entire day and picking up a dozen things that interest me, wouldn’t it be great if I could tune to all the world’s public broadcasters and specify the particular types of content that I’m interested in?” (Christian Science Monitor 2004)

Most prominent among the services suggested by Maffin is that of podcasting, facilitated through a standard of Real Simple Syndication (RSS) technology, a digital distribution format that also fuels blogs and news feeds. RSS technology allows web content to be tracked, refreshed and uploaded to a system as soon as the distributor has made it available. Through access to an RSS feed, recorded audio content is aggregated by podcast clients (such as iPodder, available to Apple computer users) and automatically sent and downloaded to the audio players of computers and portable MP3 or iPod units.⁵ The ability for anyone with a RSS feed and microphone to create a podcast *and* upload it for syndication is antidotal for artists and creative persons who’ve had neither adequate access to media institutions, nor flexibility with respect to the broadcast flow in which their creative content is placed. To this end, Maffin has also enthused on podcasting’s facilitation of an amateur culture of radio producers:

podcasters are by nature an experimental group -- they tweak this, push that. And this experimenting extends to more than the technology. Podcasters are experimenting with the form of radio itself: unique placement of pacing elements, new forms of narrative, and the development of unique characters. Podcasters embrace the new, while much of radio is based on the same tried-and-true magazine form: Show theme, host intro, a sting or bumper, first item, extro, another sting, second item, etc (Maffin 2004)

The auxiliary production frames (featuring themes, introductions, *etc*) of radio that Maffin refers to highlight significant differences between the communicative contexts of

podcasters and those of broadcasters. Podcasting inhabits an auditory field where ‘lack of fit’ is accommodated by digitalized distribution systems, allowing listeners to assimilate a miscellany of programs into their day, at their discretion. Conversely, the management of terrestrial broadcast radio repertoires is consonant with radio’s ‘presentism’. The aggregation of radio audiences throughout the day is achieved in traditional radio through the continual refreshment *and* situation of transmissions in adherence to clock and calendar. Before exemplifying program-building histories, I will elaborate on the cultural parameters of radio scheduling using perspectives specific to media and radio studies.

Radio Flow and Broadcasting Time

“the interest of a historical reconstruction of broadcasting is, in part, the recovery of that moment when practices had to be worked out, the methodological reproducible ways of doing broadcasting had to be found”

-Paddy Scannell in *Radio, Television, and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach* (1996: 9)

Radio’s spatial dimensions delineate both scales of community within range of radio transmissions and how listeners mediate and are led *through* a given day’s programming. What Hendy calls radio’s “*temporal rhythms* – its narrative structures, hourly cycles and daily and weekly schedules” (Hendy 2000b: 178) are interpreted by individual listeners in a myriad of ways and are anticipated by radio programmers mindful of radio’s effectiveness at proffering shared listening experiences. Hendy elaborates on radio’s meaningfulness in *Radio in the Global Age* (2000):

the familiarity engendered over time is one of the foundations upon which radio’s intimacy is built (...) we rarely tape a radio program in the way we might record a favourite television program – so, like everyone else, we have to be listening *at the time* to catch a particular program. And if we are listening at the same time, that means we have something in common:

our lives stand in the same temporal relationship to the programs we hear (Hendy 2000b: 184).

Certainly, adding to the anthology value of programs is another critical element of radio's appeal – voice. The emotive resonance of the broadcasting personality (as appreciated by fans of the late Canadian broadcaster Peter Gzowski's program *Morningside*) serves to connect listeners over daily and generational time. This resonance explains how radio works over its listeners at a level that is intimate, yet may also be keyed to a sense of national identity (see Adrio (1994)).

If the practice of organizing broadcasting output may be considered a cultural form, then with Scannell's observation in mind, it can further be said that the cultural *basis* of public broadcasting was initiated by institutional cores which first set about the task of managing programming output appropriate to how the medium would be received and used by the public. As suggested, radio's history is embodied in the management of technologies of radio and radio *listening*.

The advancement of industrial capitalism inevitably contributed to a contradiction between the “needs of new kinds of social organization” (Williams 1992: 20) resultant from the dispersion of extended families and labour and industrial organization over space and “an imperative need for new kinds of contact” (Williams 1992: 21). Distinct, of course, from radio technologies employed in navigation or astronomy, radio broadcasting (the transmission of *intelligence*) could be carried out with a social and educative ethos in mind, to make the world knowable.⁶ In this, radio (though it was the first *electronic* domestic device) recalled existing industrial innovations that had already been introduced in and outside of many homes up to the end of the 1920s. As described by Raymond

Williams, the steady growth of ‘consumer durables’ in America, Britain, Germany and France in particular, introduced new methods and technologies of transport and communication that were partly successful because they imbued a sense of pro-social engagement while maintaining individual and familial privacies. Box cameras, motorcycles and motorcars signified public mobility and curiosities while radio sets and home electronic appliances intimated domestic self-sufficiency. The perceived dissolve of public connectivity implied by Williams’ concept of *mobile privatization* (Williams 1974) would duly be addressed in imbrications of service ideals and civic responsibilities for the new medium. Support for radio service as a public good would correspondingly be measured through successes in anticipating *ways of doing broadcasting* which enhanced a sense that its ostensibly private consumption was at the same time generating and contributing to the public life of the listener, indeed a “shared public life of quite a new kind” (Scannell 1989 in Lacey 2002: 34).

Just as citizens pursued balance with respect to home and public affairs, institutions establishing conventions for broadcasting sought balance for radio’s output. Questions of variety (what *kinds* of programs?) had to be followed by questions of timing (*when* and for *how long* will programs air?). On challenges the first terrestrial broadcasters had in making quotidian the concept of daily and weekly broadcasting time, Paddy Scannell observes in *Radio, Television, and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach* (1996):

the medium in which radio and television exists is time. It is that which has to be filled with content, it is that which is ‘spent’ in listening and viewing. At first the task of broadcasters was a simple, overwhelming one of filling ‘empty time.’ Programs were indeed produced any old way and transmitted any old how with little, if any, thought beyond the ever-present and pressing dilemma of how to get *something* on air and in then

something else to follow it. The institutionalization of broadcasting (...) meant the stabilization of what it did and that, in effect, meant the routinization of production (Scannell 1996: 9).

The critical distinction between the discrete event (the performance of *a* play, the reading of *a* book) and the sequences allowed by broadcasting technologies is inherent to the latter's need to fill space in the transmission. In the early days of broadcasting when radio content very often mimicked familiar formats such as concert performances, plays, sermons or lectures, the isolated program could more readily stand alone since it was imbued with the prestige and singularity of public events.

Surely, in those pioneering days of broadcasting when so many programs were accompanied by so much dead air, individual programs would have seemed ever more arresting. However, Scannell adds that in broadcasting “a *single* program has no identity: it is a transient thing that perishes at the moment of transmission. For output to have the regular, familiar routine character that it has, seriality is crucial throughout the range of output” (Scannell 1996: 10). A key aim of the early public broadcasting institutions was to encourage a relationship between listener and broadcaster through establishing accord between programming flows and overarching broadcasting philosophies or cultural missions. Raymond Williams posits in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1992):

the word ‘program’ is characteristic, with its traditional bases in theatre and music hall. With increasing organization, as the service extended, this ‘program’ became a series of timed units. Each unit could be thought of discretely, and the work of programming was a serial assembly of these units. Problems of mix and proportion became paramount in broadcasting policy” (Williams 1992: 82).

To take one example, the problems described by Williams were balanced (as further discussed below), in the second phase of BBC programming beginning in 1939 by specializing services and embedding programs within a programming template.

‘General’, ‘popular,’ and ‘educated’ broadcasts were manifest in the BBC’s Home, Light and Third services. However, the broadcasting philosophies and production cultures behind this assemblage of alternatives (and the listings which formalized them as such) are less significant to Williams than is how one sequence is “transformed by the inclusion of another kind of sequence, so that these sequences together compose the real flow, the real ‘broadcasting’” (Williams 1992: 84). Facilitating flow throughout the broadcast day is, for Williams, central to programming activity, more so than the scheduling of any one unit of programming. A broadcaster’s ability to aggregate audiences over the course of an hour or an evening is made possible by interruptions and intervals between discrete programs. The sum of these commercials, test cards or jingles represents illusions of ‘marked time’ in broadcasting.

Uses of (Public) Radio

Radio’s apparent evanescence allows its flows to adapt and acquiesce to tandem primary activities of work, home and leisure. Listeners typically *capture* radio at their convenience rather than being led through a day’s scheduled flow (as is often the case with television, for example, and its touted ‘Friday Night’ line-ups).⁷ The convenience of portable radio listening devices, such as transistor radios and walkmans make this evanescence even more pronounced. The various continuity techniques created to guide the listener through radio programming are often set into schedules with awareness that contemporaneous matters foreground audiences’ listening environments:

radio does not just adapt to these routines and structure its output accordingly across the daily schedule, it also helps *over time* to ‘thematize’ our days. By marking off each *part* of the day as somehow different – ‘breakfast time’, ‘drive’ time’ – and marking off each day *as a whole* as a *new* day with fresh events (...) broadcasting, whose medium is time, articulates our sense of time (Scannel 1996: 148,152).

If, as McLuhan opined, “radio is provided with a cloak of invisibility” (McLuhan 1964: 263), this invisibility is also *clocked*. Seriality and the sequencing is normalized temporarily (for instance, morning and drive-home blocks) in order to establish format identities and allow for the segmentation necessary (particularly in commercial radio) to position advertisers and to enhance broadcasting competition, to accommodate hourly news and weather updates – as well as to anticipate the many desultory uses of radio. Measuring the effects of radio programming schemes is partly made difficult by this ‘secondariness’ and blindness of the medium since

broadcasting takes its norm from standard clock time but its being is towards my-time. Broadcast time *faces* my-time, and insofar as it is *for* my-time, it is in harmony with it. The manifold temporal arrangements of broadcasting converge to produce ‘an appropriate now’ for me or anyone (Scannell 1996: 174).

This concord between programming routines and listeners’ latitude with respect to *uses* is for R. Murray Schafer (1993) less representative of harmony than it is suggestive of the arbitrary subjugation of radio as social time keeper. In this consideration, conventional radio is viewed as the “clock of Western civilization” maintaining “the pulse of a society organized for maximum production and consumption (...) Had radio been invented in 1750, factory workers would have seized it as a means of securing punctual and efficient service from their workers” (Schafer 1993: 134, 135). It was, however, the system developed in 1920s America (Douglas 1997; Lewis 1991) that inaugurated the now

routine adaptation of media flows to temporal imperatives and ends of commercial broadcasting time. Institutionalized radio built on an enlightenment principle is more likely to accommodate experimental programming (Truax 2001: 219) and programming produced with primary listening in mind, as suggested by an example Schafer provides of a thirty-six hour Irish Radio broadcast of Joyce's *Ulysses* (Schafer 1993: 135).⁷ While Schafer would reject the mechanisms of broadcasting flow described by Williams because of their evocation of imperious church bells and industrial whistles, he is rather more in accord with the tapestry allowed by public radio. Notwithstanding, Schafer does example a phenomenological conceit for radio production, 'Radical Radio' (Schafer 1993), which in comparison, renders even most public radio flows as aurally uninspired and heavily formatted.⁸

A necessary concern of public radio broadcasters must be with maintaining information and educative programming goals given that radio is so often defaulted to for ephemeral and cursory usage. Unlike programs created for on-demand use, broadcast radio's continuousness means that at any time its programming may be used as 'background', even if the intent of a program, such as a half-hour news report, suggests a degree of concentrated listening. As Philip Abrams contends in 'Radio and Television' (1964):

because programs are so easily and constantly available, one thing that most members of the audience are likely to ask of the media sooner or later is that they provide a certain minimum of wholly undemanding distraction. Radio and television are asked to do things which other, non-domestic, discontinuous, selective media cannot – to allow listeners and viewers to relax (Abrams 1964: 60).

With this tendency in mind, the strategies employed to make radio's ancillary 'service function' congruent with its public service functions (such as program building, block scheduling or the 'hiving-off' of minority or experimental programming to non-peak hours) may reveal a great deal about broadcasting philosophies and institutional priorities. Related to this, Schafer contends:

in the old days, radio programs existed as discrete entities for special interest groups. Program guides were published and consulted (...) broadcasting as signal disappeared when the program schedule ceased to be printed. What replaced it was jabberware (Schafer 1993: 138).

The program schedules Schafer recalls, such as the BBC *Radio Times*, were conceived (as I will discuss below) during the first decades of broadcasting when 'appointment' listening was marked by the *deliberate* absence of fixed or regular program times. An aim to surprise listeners through continually alerting their aural attention was, in fact, resonant with the edifying principles of the BBC's early programming policy (McDonnell 1991). The *perils* of programming standardization were accordingly lampooned in the BBC *Radio Times* during the 1930s: "a grotesque idea of possibilities in this direction is provided by the mental picture of America leaping out of bed a signal from the wireless and solemnly going through its morning exercises at the command of a voice from the air" (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 373).

It is from these structures of broadcasting time and space that subsequent generations of auditory experimenters – radio artists and podcasters among them – have innovated. Of course, well before programming templates and scheduling became the premiere idioms framing broadcast output, technical facilitation of the medium and its operational forms was necessary. What kind of medium was it to be, and what how

would its content be ordered? The Canadian case illustrates that early broadcasters and their regulating bodies had a limited grasp of the new mass medium's capacity to fulfil social uses - uses which are rarely invoked in contemporary rhetoric around the conveniences of on-demand, individualized media.

Histories

Towards Radio Programming in Canada

Not only did the first broadcasters have to negotiate with the financial and political wills under girding their institutionalization, they were also responsible for suitably coding what Susan Douglas (2004) calls the 'etheric' spaces imagined by the new broadcasting medium. Hundreds of amateur enthusiasts experimented with the new medium's structural and creative forms aided in the popularization of radio production and radio listening in Canada. Comparable to theatrical bills, most programs tended to be rigidly structured in half-hour, quarter-hour, or hourly formats with music from gramophone records being played into the sets' microphone. As hobbyists launched makeshift control rooms from their parlour and living rooms, many of the early crystal or wireless telephone sets were duly homemade, fashioned from Quaker Oats tins and Sifto Salt Boxes (McNeil and Wolfe 1982) or assembled from component parts ordered through the post. Early microphones, too, were merely telephones fitted with horn –illustrative of Anthony Smith's muse that "Marconi had made waves travel through the air and enabled the telephone to be split into two halves, one half for the communicator, and one for the audience" (Smith 1973: 33). Output in those early years demonstrated this structural

collage, spread out over only a few hours of programming a day. The initial transmissions by the Montreal Marconi Company station XWA in 1919 were to ham operators and consisted of not much more than repetitions of the phrase ‘testing one, two three’ (Stewart 1985: 29). In *The Microphone Wars: A History of Triumph and Betrayal at the CBC* (1994), Knowlton Nash furthermore details the precarious quality of broadcasting in Canada during the early 1920s where “interruptions and ‘dead air’ were frequent as equipment broke down or performers failed to show up, and ‘there will now be an intermission of ten minutes’ became a familiar phrase” (Nash 1994: 34). Broadcasting during the 1910s and 1920s was comprised of numerous unintentional silences and it followed that the normalization of output was signally necessary before conventions around programming and scheduling could ever be developed.

Early Radio Policy in Canada

While the Canadian model of public radio broadcasting is recognized for its espoused objectives to enrich the linguistic, intellectual, ethnic, and cultural wealth of its citizens through mandate programming, it is not an exaggeration to state that in its earliest days these cultural dimensions went largely unacknowledged. Policy around radio, as Vipond (1992) suggests, betrayed an *ad hoc* implementation as government officials and radio operators alike set about the technical management of the new medium. The regulatory precedent for radio was most approximated by wireless and wired point-to-point telegraphy, and so it was that the Department of Marine and Fisheries, radio’s regulatory body since the 1905 Wireless Telegraphy Act, was charged as its licensing agency. While a separate Radio Branch of the Department of Naval Services was created to oversee radio (or wireless telephony, as it was commonly referred to until the late 1920s)

following the passage of the Radiotelegraphic Act of 1913, this Radio Branch would be the sole institutional agency dealing with radio until the Radio Broadcasting Act of 1932 (Vipond 1992: 9). Of course, radio's capacity for continuous mass transmission of content made it unique from telephony. Officials at the Radio Branch discovered that solely monitoring licenses of operation and licenses for receiving devices did not suitably address the needs of a new category of media users. Indeed, up until 1932's Aird Commission, the Branch's hesitancy to furnish cultural considerations for radio policy delayed the economic and cultural growth of Canadian radio system.

In 1922, thirty-six stations existed in Canada (Vipond 1992: 172), and by the late 1920s, seventy-five private commercial licenses had been issued (Raboy 1990: 21). Of these early stations, many functioned as promotional extensions of existing newspaper operations, as was the case for the *Edmonton Journal* or the *Manitoba Free Press*. In a similar vein, radio manufacturers and dealers were among the first station operators - the Marconi Company had been the first to discover that the creation of radio programs was an attractive means of advertising radio *sets*. Bell Telephone, the Canadian National Railroad, Queen's University, the University of Alberta, and the Manitoba Government owned other licensed stations. Amateurs or private groups, such as religious organizations, owned fewer than half of radio licenses in 1926. While it has been remarked that "radio operators almost overnight were allowed to grab wavelengths like early settlers staking claims on land" (Smith 1973: 56), by the mid 1920s the harnessing of the electromagnetic spectrum by so many stations produced considerable interference to domestic stations (indeed, partisan interference with respect to the issuing of licenses was also attributed to the Liberal Government of Mackenzie King. Opposition parties

alleged that political favouritism played a large role in frequency allocation by the Department of Marine and Fisheries (Hindley 1977)). In major cities for example, stations were assigned wavelengths ten meters apart, even though frequency interference was likely where wavelengths were closer than 30 or 40 meters (Vipond 1992: 173). The low-wattage sets owned by most Canadians had poor amplification abilities and could not bring in weaker stations or discriminate between signals closely placed on the radio band. Added to this, poor selectivity and sensitivity meant that sets also experienced static interference and signal oscillations.

The combined effect of atmospheric pollutions, congestion of radio signals (many from proliferate and higher-wattage American stations) and a reliance on low-wattage, single-tube radio sets meant that reception in some places was only possible during evening silences. Vital issues for radio's regulation became matters of frequency allocation. While seasoned dial twiddling ham and DX-ing enthusiasts logging distant stations were rewarded for their 'listening-in' assiduity, periodically picking up tinny short-waved voices at dusk and dawn, the Radio Branch moved these and other amateur operators to continuous-wave transmitters. These operators accordingly and voluntarily "established a silent period between 7:30 and 10:00 every evening" (Vipond 1992: 130). In further efforts to improve reception, no two local stations were allowed to broadcast at the same time and coordination of broadcast hours between stations was critical.⁹

In 1924 and 1925, motions by the Radio Branch to experiment with simultaneous or dual broadcasting were struck down by an "alliance of broadcasters, manufacturers and radio dealers" (Vipond 1992: 175) who feared backlash from listeners resentful of having to purchase the multi-tube sets such a move necessitated (notably, many of these

manufacturers and dealers were subsidiaries of American firms, and were therefore only tenuously supportive of a competitive Canadian radio infrastructure). A ban on simultaneous broadcasting meant that stations had little choice but to share broadcasting time as it required all stations - except in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver where each city was allotted two frequencies - to transmit content using a single wavelength. In 1925, in a move to improve reception in the cities, the Branch did make available to city broadcasters the option of transmitting on 'district' wavelengths, enabling central production to remain in city studios while transmitters would be located ten miles away (Vipond 1992: 178). Yet subsequent restrictions on high-power transmitters near city populations and considerable demand for access to the wavelengths meant that these additional frequencies did little to open up the broadcasting field or increase broadcasting hours. Indeed, the cost of setting up stations, approximately \$15,000 throughout the twenties (Vipond 1992: 177), hardly seemed worthwhile when broadcasting hours were limited to approximately 5 hours a week. Given these constraints, it became difficult to attract creative and technical talent and managers with business acumen appropriate to the new medium.

Throughout the 1920s, broadcast management involved both the selection of programs by individual stations *and* negotiations between stations with respect to shared wavelengths. As stated, most stations in the early days of radio broadcast only a few hours a week. For example, though the first Marconi station had been built in 1919 in Montreal, in 1922 it still only broadcast a total of two hours a week, "on Monday and Thursday evenings from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m., with a grab-bag of music, news, stories" (Vipond 1992: 80). As Vipond evidences, eight months later the station broadcast

weekdays from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. and 9:00 to 9:30 p.m. “with music, and entertainment, news, and market reports” (Vipond 1992:80). In 1923, the station broadcast “daily except Sundays from 1:00 to 1:40 p.m. with weather reports and forecasts, financial and livestock market reports, and news, and from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with bedtime stories, music, and telegraph instruction” (Vipond 1992:80). Ten hours of CFCF broadcasting a week was, beginning in 1923, also coordinated with the Montreal station owned by *La Presse*, CKAC. The latter’s broadcasting hours were discontinuous and scattered as were those of the two additional stations which would share the Montreal wavelengths in the proceeding years. By 1927, Montreal residents still only “had access to local radio programming via four different stations, for a total of about fifty hours each week” (Vipond 1992: 80). This number may be compared with New York City, where that same year the combined weekly broadcast hours of its local stations were well over 700 (Vipond 1992: 81). The insistence by the Branch that “friendly competition” (Vipond 1992: 175) would do “much to develop the art” (Vipond 1992: 175) of radio was presumably resented by broadcasters aware of the infeasibility of such an enterprise.

While the variety amongst types of programs was increasing, opportunities for sustained listening were limited. Relative to this, Vipond observes that “American broadcasters realized early on that continuity was one of the keys to radio listening” (Vipond 1992: 82).¹⁰ The popularity of the New York stations was facilitated by centralization of programming in the form of network or ‘chain broadcasting.’ As Douglas describes, this “standardized the broadcast day so that listeners tuning between stations at night often heard the same chain program” (Douglas 1999) No comparable

uniformity of output or distribution existed in Canada, and since radio flows function to brace the loyalty of audiences and advertisers alike, the patchworks of silence which lasted from minutes to hours on Canadian receivers frustrated attempts to build audiences and attract consistent revenue from program sponsors.

It followed that by decade's end "Canadian stations that frequently went off the air, for whatever reason, sounded primitive and amateurish compared to the professional, smooth-flowing programming of the trend-setting US stations" (Vipond 1992: 83). Measures to fill scheduling gaps wherever possible by indiscriminately slotting low-budgeted programs or records of American programs did little for the integrity of the Canadian system. Many Canadian stations, in fact, coordinated programming hours to avoid interference and scheduling conflicts with popular American stations. Two stations located in London, Ontario, for example, ceased broadcasting after 8:15 p.m. to facilitate clear reception of American concerts (Vipond 1992: 176). By the late 1920s, *Maclean's* magazine was able to announce that "nine-tenths of the radio fans in this dominion hear three or four times as many US stations as Canadian (...) few fans, no matter what part of Canada they live, can regularly pick up more than three or four Canadian stations" (CBC 1978: 10). And so while these years of experimentation were valuable insofar as Canadians stations had opportunities to rehearse practices of broadcasting before being faced with the competitiveness ensured by simultaneous broadcasting, by the time they were able to do so they discovered that much of their potential audience preferred the sophistication of the American system. This effect would carry tremendous importance as the sovereignty of Canadian radio was fiercely argued during 1932's Aird Commission and 1932's Special Parliamentary Committee on Radio Broadcasting. The countless

'natural monopolies' (Hindley 1977) of stations with individual frequencies were subsequently interrogated not only for their regulatory complications, but also their obfuscation of a legitimately public vision for Canada's airwaves.

Numerous accounts of broadcasting in Canada have documented the grafting of policies and technical infrastructures of broadcasting which followed the Aird Commission (Raboy 1990; Peers 1969), including the eventual enshrining of national public broadcasting in the form of the CRBC and later the CBC. What should be evident, however, from the preceding examples is that the regulation of Canadian broadcasting as a public utility evolved to encompass a public service purpose only when officials began to take its cultural dimensions (including its ability to legitimize state power) seriously. That this required the facilitation and construct of regular radio programming generated from Canadian stations is perhaps an underappreciated feature of Canadian broadcasting history.

Having noted the disruptive role silences held for those seeking to establish the contours of regular broadcasting in Canada, it is to the management of radio programming *and its silences* in Britain that I will now turn. The BBC's monopoly on broadcasting and its guarantee of license fee revenue allowed it to move forward with the practice of seeing to an 'art of radio' well before Canadian radio enterprises.¹¹ This framework hastened the BBC's ability to carry out a cultural mission that would, at least in the premiere strategies of its founding Director-General John Reith, be able to include terrestrial silences as components of a service ideal for radio communication.

The BBC: Institutional Control

“It is not unfair to say that the early conceptions of public broadcasting were as varied and unclear as some of the sounds that came through the air on a dark and stormy night” (Marc Raboy 1990: 5)

The privilege of total institutional control of the scarce resource of wireless communication distinguished the public service tradition initiated by the BBC’s first General Manager and Director-General, John Reith, as it did the Arnoldian or Leavisite inspired sense of educative duties held by the pioneer programmers of that period and British high society more broadly. To be sure, the institutional legitimacy of early British broadcasting may be located within existing establishment beliefs in the “civilizing influence” (Eagleton in Lacey 2002) of government. While critiques of Reith’s arguably elitist and paternalistic, even apostolic approach are manifold (Hawkins 1999; Scannell and Cardiff 1990; Smith 1973; Eagleton in Lacey 2002 are just a few), the purpose of the ensuing reflections taken from the expansive history of the BBC is to inform an understanding of radio scheduling as a form capable of expressing the curatorial intent of public broadcasting institutions. As I will suggest, early BBC programming practices were enabled by the BBC’s monopoly and through Reith’s view of broadcasting’s utility to enlighten and uplift. Scheduling under Reith would be arranged so that the temporal sequences unique to the new medium of radio could be realized “as if broadcasting were the technology which would ensure the victory of Arnold’s ideal to let ‘sweetness and light’ prevail” (Smith 1973: 70).

In Britain, those with the means to pursue infrastructures necessary for radio broadcasting already had stakes in radio and telephony equipment. The first organized group of radio amateurs in Britain to open a station was comprised of radio engineers

from the Marconi Company who, having secured the requisite license from the Post Office in 1922, formed 2LO. While that station's broadcasting contribution was limited to one hour a day, other manufacturers of wireless sets soon following suit in Manchester and Birmingham. Yet the Post Office – already in the business monopoly having controlled point-to-point services of telegraphy and telephony since 1869 and 1880 respectively – was averse to encouraging these pioneering enterprises. Unlike in the United States and Canada where a myriad of stations had been in operation since the early 1910s, the British government had concerns, given the country's size and density, over possibilities of atmospheric interference to military and government communications caused by amateur stations and radio experimenters. While a network of regional stations existed and was able to transmit both its own programs and occasionally unite for simultaneous broadcasts, the Post Office's reluctance to issue licenses hampered the development of wireless as a broadcasting medium in Britain. Bureaucratic consternation over radiophonic 'anarchy' (Crisell 2002: 19) was resolved in 1922 when the Postmaster General, aligning with several prominent wireless manufacturers (Marconi, Western Electric, Metropolitan Vickers and General Electric among them), formed a consortium known as the British Broadcasting Company Ltd.

The British Broadcasting Company's original mandate following its acquisition of a license in 1922 was to provide "news, information, concerts, lectures, educational matters, speeches, weather reports, theatrical entertainment and any other matter which for the time being may be permitted" (Walker 1992: 16). The first non-amateur radio programs were produced and transmitted through a networked system composed of regional centres (Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Newcastle among them), and a

number of relay stations equipped to transmit simultaneously broadcasts from any of the regional stations and the company's London headquarters (Crisell 2002: 21). As in Canada, British radio's evolution from private point-to-point communications meant that its broadcasting potential was tentatively realized, "typically" writes Crisell, "transmissions might not begin until the late afternoon and would end well before midnight" (Crisell 2002: 20). By 1925, 80 percent of the population was within reach of radio services, though Reith's principal focus was to promote a unified broadcasting system whose cultural and creative hub was the nation's capital. The Report of the 1925 Broadcasting Committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Crawford precipitating the formation of the British Broadcasting Corporation formally introduced concerns over cultural standards, or 'height of brow' that have bedevilled broadcasting discourses to the present day. The Report advised:

the listener is entitled to latitude. He must not be pressed to assimilate too much of what he calls 'highbrow' broadcast (...) We are assured by musicians eminent in their art and versed in this very problem, that this very problem, that the gradual infusion of improved standards will be welcomed by listeners – unconsciously at first, but with growing appreciation amongst those who will instinctively learn to desire better performances (Smith 1973: 32).

Early regulators in Britain identified the broadcasting institution as a cultural intermediary between creative artists and audiences – though these observers were also aware that the new varieties of entertainment and information transmitted by radio had to be arranged in such a way as to promote a social or cultural good.¹² This was a formidable ambition as the BBC struggled to construct an infrastructure and pragmatics for broadcasting that could "penetrate into the daily lives of diverse communities, many of which were still tightly-knit and resistant to mass centralized pressure" (Kumar 1986:

51). The British Broadcasting Company's dissolve in 1927 and its ascent by royal charter into the publicly owned British Broadcasting Corporation hastened the consolidation of the smaller stations into a single Regional network. This allowed Reith to centralize BBC output within a regular national programming scheme in which the Corporation's National service in London increasingly subsumed programming output from the Regional network. Scannell and Cardiff suggest in *A Social History of British Broadcasting* (1991) that this move marked "the point at which broadcasting became self-conscious, and a set of institutional relations replaced the initial interpersonal relations of the local stations. A new model listener was required to take full advantage of what radio now offered" (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 370). With the financial solvency of the British Broadcasting Corporation established, Director-General Reith began to engineer a programming philosophy deferential to its government remit and the vaguely understood public his organization would propose to serve.

The BBC: Strategies for Radio Scheduling in the Public Interest

Though it is not possible here to extensively detail the range of administrative and creative endeavours which contributed to regular BBC output and scheduling policies in its beginning decades (see Scannell and Cardiff 1991; Pegg 1986), it is instructive to isolate themes with respect to how the temporal arrangement of BBC radio programs was executed while it innovated with policies of public service.¹³ As already stated, radio's status as primary domestic medium at that time and the BBC's monopoly on radio contributed to cementing *ideals* for listening and programming. In Reith's view, the broadcasting day could be overtly disciplined with the purpose of catering to audiences with different needs for radio. Several years before the BBC's royal ascent, Reith had

already communicated a vision for broadcasting reflective of radio's indeterminacy. In a small publication entitled "Broadcasting over Britain" (1924), Reith's intention to suffuse educationalist interests to the *privilege* of broadcasting is apparent:

Broadcasting brings relations and interest to many homes where such things are at a premium. It does far more: it carries direct information on a hundred subjects to innumerable people who thereby will be enabled not only to take more interest in events which formerly were outside their ken, but who will after a short time be in a position to make up their own minds on many matters of vital moment, matters which formerly they had either to receive according to the dictated and partial versions or opinions of others, or to ignore altogether. A new and might weight of public opinion is being formed (qtd. in McDonnell 1991: 11-12).

Reith, who paid his early BBC announcers a clothing allowance so that they could wear tuxedos while on air, proclaimed, "to have exploited so great a scientific invention for the purpose and pursuit of entertainment alone would have been a prostitution of its powers and an insult to the character and intelligence of the public" (Nash 1994: 38). Reith's programming ideal was constituted around an approach predicating that because the listening public was comprised of sundry class and education levels, it was the responsibility of the BBC to *lead* taste.¹⁴

At the core of Reith's approach was a policy of 'mixed programming.' The mission was to offer a variety of programs and to ensure that the listening public was exposed to a range of programming - or as Crisell sums it, to give the listener "something a little better than she thought she wanted" (Crisell 2001: 29).¹⁵ While content variety was essential to reaching specific audiences such as mothers, youngsters, intellectuals or musicians, how these programs were arranged throughout the broadcast day and week was also critical to service goals of enriching and renewing the listener's "alertness to the medium" (Crisell 2001: 29). It was advised that the model listener ought to "recognize

that a definite obligation rests on him to choose intelligently from the programs offered to him (...) if you only listen with half an ear, you haven't got a quarter of a right to criticize" (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 371).¹⁶ Though the BBC had enough programs to more or less fill a broadcast day, these programs varied in length and were arranged without fixed or locked points.

In 1923, Reith launched the *Radio Times*, a listing of program times and articles related to BBC programs and personalities. In 1929, *The Listener* appeared as a periodical comprised of critical and analytical essays, music and program reviews. These publications furthered Reith's steers towards constructive listening, though they also formalized programming practices that made casual radio listening inherently difficult. Rarely would any program or type of program (hourly news reports withstanding) be broadcast at the same time each day or week. Radio was to be used, in the minds of Reith and his colleagues, as an occasional resource. Listeners were encouraged to consult listings in the *Radio Times* in order pre-arrange a day or week's listening much as they would plan a weekend trip to a concert hall or theatre. Admittedly frustrating for listeners, the strategy also promoted a professional environment in which, "each announcer seemed concerned only with the one program item that he announced (...) and innocent of any knowledge of what had gone before or was to come" (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 371). In fact, as Crisell offers, "frequently there were pauses between programs to enable listeners to adjust to a change in stimulus or even switch off. The BBC *Radio Times* urged them to 'give the wireless a rest' from time to time" (Crisell 2001: 53). This affirmation of the terrestrial silences through which programming is strung reveals a broadcasting philosophy which assumed that passive or routine listening

to be associated with standardization. By *deliberately* introducing chance and uncertainty and flexibility for programmers (as opposed to the *unintentional* randomness of early short-wave transmissions or the cluttered output that would mark the beginning years of the Canadian system), Reith sought to avoid continuity techniques associated with American radio. The latter's punctuation of programming flows with advertisements and jingles promoted perfunctory listening, a listening position which was anathema to Reith's confidence in radio as a medium of enlightenment and education. Listeners might be presented, following a comedic play for example, with a documentary on some scholarly theme – or vice versa. Yet it soon became evident that even with a monopoly the BBC risked the guarantee of its license fee if it continued only to privilege *proper*, rather than practical, uses of radio.

Though a majority of institutions in the early decades of twentieth century Britain - media not least among them - lacked research into user and consumer tastes and habits (Pegg 1986), by the mid 1930s systematic research into listener routines was critical to the effectiveness of the BBC and the communicative success of institutional radio as whole. In 1934, the Program Revision Committee of the BBC was created with the purpose to “consider the timing of programs, the ratio between different kinds of programs and ‘the efficiency of the programs as a whole’” (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 233). Soon after this, and with Reith's tentative support, the Listener Research Department was established in 1936. Early inquiries focused on listening habits: “in each case the intention was to discover the times that listeners, in summer and winter, turned on their radio sets and when they turned them off through each day of the week” (Scannell and Cardiff 1990: 376). Findings amassed from listener surveys and random

sampling techniques led to the identification of four categories of listeners: those in the “wireless trade, the ‘tap’ listener, the occasional listener and the serious listener” (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 233). What was significant about these categories was their substantiation that listening publics were not only made up of a myriad of demographic profiles, but also that these publics had different temporal uses for radio. While the first category was comprised of radio industry members for whom the institutional competency and popularity of radio was essential, the other categories represented listeners who were decidedly varied in their use of radio as an educative or entertainment medium. It was concluded that through the normalization of schedules the medium’s intimations could best be managed and audiences maximized. Programs would be created which better suited and assimilated to preferred listener tastes *and* needs. David Hendy details the enduring significance of these manoeuvres for radio organizations in *Radio in the Global Age* (2000):

a radio program invariably has to conform to some degree or another to an overall *station format* as well as its own *program format*. It also has to fit in some way or another with a particular station’s *schedule* of programs over the course of a day, or week or year. Secondly, the sheer magnitude of broadcast output, twenty-four hours a day for 365 days a year, creates a demand for programs which in the long term can only be sustained by the use of some form of production *template*, simply in order to avoid the uneconomical use of time, resources and mental energy. Most radio production is therefore ‘serial’ and ‘routinized’, not just in order to establish a reassuringly familiar sound or ‘feel’ to a program over time, but for simple reasons of cost and time efficiency (Hendy 2000b: 70).

Schedules allowed listeners to plan their listening ahead of time, as they had before, though it also aggregated audiences at regular daily or weekly times. Programmers could now anticipate audiences being tuned in over the course of an evening prior to the broadcast of popular or peak hour programs. From this, preceding programs benefited

from audience run-offs as listeners were presented with similar *types* of programs until the end of the broadcast day. While these ‘inheritance’ factors would become common terms in radio and television programming practices, their immediate effect was to suffuse a recognizable identity to programs and listening periods. As Scannell notes, “the net effect of all these techniques is cumulative. In and through time program output, in all its parts and as a whole, takes on a settled, familiar, known and taken-for-granted character as the reclusive condition of its daily occurrence” (Scannell 1996: 11). With the possible exception of a minority of *serious* listeners, the view that radio programming be imbued with a variance of sermon and surprise diminished. By the post-war period, radio in Britain increasingly assumed a variety of roles and meanings in the home, and the nation’s public broadcaster restructured its radio operations accordingly.

Radio Space Made Elastic Again: Haley’s Cultural Pyramid and the BBC’s Third Program

Following the end of the Second World War, radio had proven itself as an important medium for the transmission of news events and was exalted by many as “the prime re-educative agency of the post-war world” (Carter 1996: 6). Six years after Reith’s departure, a new Director-General, William Haley, was appointed in 1944 to oversee the Post-War reorganization of BBC services. Haley’s decision to build a tripartite system to enhance choice for listeners across three radio networks - Home, Light, and Third – was a critical retreat from the Reithian model which aspired to attract (either through serendipity or loyalty) a range of listeners to a *single* channel. During the war, a Forces network had complemented the London-based Home service of the BBC for military personnel serving abroad. In 1943, the Forces network was renamed the Light network.

The Home network continued to draw upon programming from its regional services, though its content (news and light entertainment fare) was not remarkably different than the Light service it was ostensibly in competition with.

In 1946, the Third network was created to serve minority audiences with “an appetite for critical discussions of art, drama, music and literature; poetry and prose readings of the less popular type; experiments in radio drama; programs in foreign languages” (Carpenter 1996: 6). The three networks dutifully comprised what Haley termed his ‘cultural pyramid’ of public service programming. The pyramid model’s tacit expectation was that the listener would commence with light or popular styles and then graduate through the course of the evening, or indeed years, to the more intellectually rigorous or experimental programming of the Third Program.¹⁷ Haley characterized the new era of public broadcasting thus:

this pyramid is served by three main Programs {networks}, differentiated by but broadly overlapping in levels and interest, each Program leading on to the other, the listener being induced through the years increasingly to discriminate in favour of the things that are more worth-while. Each program at any given moment must be ahead of its public, but not so much as to lose their confidence. The listener must be led from good to better by curiosity, liking, and a growth of understanding. As the standards of the education and culture of the country rise so should the program pyramid as a whole (qtd. in Crisell 2002: 69)

The pyramid was topped off by the Third, the only channel that insisted on ignoring the fixed points that had become standard in almost all BBC programming by 1940 (Shingler and Wieringa 1998: 8). The creators of the Third Network maintained that the routinization of programming had led to a dearth of creativity in broadcasting – one responsible for driving away not only educated and intellectual audiences, but also creative talent that resented constrictions of broadcasting time. Furthermore, many

producers and artists alike considered ‘clock-watching’ to be anathema to the integrity of live performances and to the flow of intellectual discussion. Pre-determined program blocks and the strict observance of timing would be avoided as much as possible. Even though the Third would only broadcast five and a half hours each day, any fixed point programming, even regular scheduling of news bulletins was initially resisted by the network’s original creators, as Haley stated:

the people in charge of it shall have completely blank open space of up to five hours a night, night after night. And if they want five nights to do it in, then have five nights (...) It followed from that that everything the {Third} program does shall be given the time that the man who created it or wrote it or composed the music thought it was necessary...There will be no cuts (qtd. in Carpenter 1996:9)

The main BBC services had retired Reith’s intentionally interruptive silences during the war to prevent listeners from confusing programmed silence with the nastier possibility that the service had been bombed off the air (Carpenter 1996: 28). Continuity announcing between Home network programs had been introduced to quell such fears and became common broadcasting practice thereafter. The Third’s producers considered these gap fillers to often be incongruous with the tone of the esteemed programs they punctuated and preferred not to “imitate the matey presentation style of the other networks” (Carpenter 1996: 29). Accordingly, unexplained silences - some several minutes long – were prominent. Rather than being attributable to neophyte announcers, they were intentionally included as gestures of *respectful silence* between programs.

In one key respect, the Third represented an experimental yet prescriptive attempt to imaginatively and fitfully confound radio programming routines which, already by the late 1940s, had become conventional. This re-embrace of radio as a medium for primary

listening was supported by the commissioning and performance of works which regularly did not obey radio time structures. Planning an evening's listening using the *Radio Times* was only partially useful since program over and under-runs were prominent, frequently resulting in postponements of scheduled programs. While many listeners wrote to newspapers thankful for lengthy productions (the third evening of transmission had featured a five-hour performance of Shaw's *Man or Superman*), others raised the issue of whether the medium was suited to a didactic treatment of complex works of art and music.¹⁸ The *Daily Telegraph* heard from one listener who felt that the Third was "giving undue importance to length...the medium of broadcasting does not lend itself to such extended broadcasts" (Carpenter 1996: 33). Noting that household sets were still immovable objects set by sitting-room firesides, one radio critic protested that concentrated listening of the Third could be achieved only "to the exclusion of meals and front-door bells" (Carpenter 1996: 33).¹⁹

By 1957, The Third's broadcast hours were cut to three and a half, with two of those reserved for an educational service known as 'Network Three', which featured specialist programming on languages and hobbies, such as beekeeping (Crisell 1986: 30). By 1964, facing poor ratings attributable to the increasing popularity of television and the success of pirate radio broadcasters (offering the contemporary rock and roll music that the BBC was slow to embrace), the Third was further truncated to air music in the daytime, educational programming in the early evenings and sports programming on Saturdays. What remained of arts and culture programming was relegated to mid to late evening hours, a time period which by the early 1960s had become the privileged reserve of a new kind of broadcast consumption.

For the purposes of this essay, what is significant about the cultural pyramid model and the initial manifestation of the Third network is its display of a public broadcasting philosophy that partially aimed to commission and curate programming through prefiguring primary uses of the medium. The introduction of transistor radio in late 1947 and television's eventual unrivalled popularity would, in most homes, relegate radio to a secondary domestic entertainment medium, further diminishing the relevance of any radio programming policy whose premiere concern was with serious listening.²⁰ From his retirement, Reith - who'd long maintained that broadcasting should universally reach and uplift the tastes of the public - characterized the tripartite system as segregationist (Abrams 1964: 56). Listeners might no longer be serendipitously challenged by what they heard and rather than graduate to new types of programming services, Reith lamented most listeners would likely become dedicated to a single light or popular fare channel. Atomization of audiences, in this context, would occur as listeners (who are at once constituents of public media institutions) lost contact with other types of programming and other listeners. It would be up to institutions to continually re-imagine ways of doing broadcasting that could balance expectations for variety and the normative expectation that the public broadcasting institution facilitate shared media experiences. On this matter, Reith's broadcasting ideals ought to be recognized today for their prescience, rather than their paternalism.

The *lean-forward* (Jauert 2003: 194) approach to programming exemplified by the BBC's Third network is, as Jauert recognizes, "the essential program structure of the old radio, representing mainly the sender perspective of broadcasting" (Jauert 2003: 194). However, arcane this structure may seem compared against competing media

experiences, it is this structure which has allowed broadcasters to variously adapt to changing uses of radio and media more broadly. Reith recognized that programming practices could be a critical service component of the public broadcast mission. In this view, the inclusion of an organizational principle to guide program selection and scheduling could also provide a degree of stability as the institution pursued its inevitable channel and service expansions. The precedent of the Third network is a reminder that radio, however yielding it might and must be to standardization, does indeed inhabit terrestrial spaces through which programmers and artists may (still) code communicative philosophies, mandated or otherwise.

Conclusion

In Williams' view, new technologies are indexical to socio-cultural needs, hence his theory on the emergence of mobile privatization in the early 20th Century. Radio broadcasting's evolution from point-to-point telephony and telegraphy necessarily created a different form of intake, what Williams describes as a "unified {or whole} social intake" (Williams 1992: 22). Although wireless radio was not an exceptionally different kind of technology compared to wireless telephony, its potential for continuous {non-discrete} and public transmission bestowed upon radio the possibility for mass communication. Early institutional practices of broadcasting therefore needed to anticipate a new kind of reception: extended listening that was also shared. The knowledge that others were listening simultaneously to one's own use of the medium

produced a whole new set of social relations – including the ‘temporal arrangements’ previously described by Scannell (1996).

The public or private imperatives of a broadcasting station or institution determine its structuring of broadcasting time. Extended listening on commercial radio is facilitated by and composed of sequences of sponsored programming which aim to hold the listener’s attention long enough to deliver it to advertisers. While advertisements do appear on some public radio stations (CBC Radio broadcast ads until the late 1960s), they are not explicitly commercially driven and are therefore able to imagine a different intent for and value to extended listening. With the BBC’s creation and its absolve from competition, Reith conceived of the first public broadcasting programming philosophy, one which inaugurated the idea of a listening public along with an intellectual consideration of the individual listener. With his policy of ‘mixed programming’, Reith sought to appeal to an assortment of (perceived) audience tastes with programming which varied between drama, news, orchestral music and so forth. His reluctance to offer fixed point schedules, thereby refreshing the listener’s attention by randomly programming variously themed material, suggests two critical understandings about radio listening. The first prefigures McLuhan’s ideas on the ‘auto-amputation’ incurred by a medium’s technological development (Angus 2000: 106). Even in an era free from the competition of other electronic mass mediums or rival broadcasters, Reith understood that the acoustic alertness of listeners might be relaxed as a result of a range of secondary uses of and secondary listening to radio. The occasional punctuation of programs with a few minutes of silence aimed to rejuvenate or re-establish the critical distance assumed of primary, focused listening. Second, because he believed radio, and more explicitly, the

BBC, to be a potentially edifying force in society, Reith interpreted his scheduling 'surprises' in terms of radio's curatorial possibilities. This refers to how the medium's time structures may be exploited in order to best present culturally significant programming.

In August 2005, the BBC announced that beginning in 2006 it would offer a broadband service allowing users of a device, tentatively titled MyBBC Player, to download radio and television programs up to a week after their original broadcast date. In addition, an expanded amount of material from the BBC's radio and television archives would also be made available. It is intended that this will attract audiences no longer sustained through its over-the-air services. In announcing the move, the BBC's current Director-General, Mark Thompson, remarked that expansion of its BBC Interactive broadband services is critical as the BBC seeks renewal of its license fee funding:

We believe that on-demand changes the terms of the debate, indeed that it will change what we mean by the word 'broadcasting' (...) Every creative leader in the BBC is wrestling with the question of what the new technologies and audience behaviours mean for them and their service (...) It should make it easier for users to find the content they want whenever and wherever they want it (BBC 2005b).

Adding that "this decade will be the decade of on-demand," (Macmillan 2005)

Thompson's comments reveal a strategy in which the need to harness the BBC's *brand* is essential to its visibility in the presence of innumerable Internet and satellite competitors. That audiences should have access to the range of BBC programming irrespective of original airdates or broadcast times is an increasingly routine service commitment of new media strategies. Such strategies reinforce an industry-wide shift from media institutions

extending their brand through competitive scheduling gambits to media institutions providing a portfolio of media choices facilitated by pull technologies. It therefore becomes much more difficult for public broadcasters to assume that ‘users’ have the same needs as ‘audiences’ and to assume the unified social intake of any information or entertainment medium. As Denis McQuail posits, “the normative status of media (...) has do with the absolute level of attachment to media in society” (McQuail 1983: 162). In considering Thompson’s announcement then, one might ask what, if any, instruction his most venerable forebear, Reith, and the producers at the Third could provide with respect to programming strategies for the 21st Century?

The capacity for contemporary on-demand audio or soundcasting technologies, such as podcasting, to engender shared listening is limited, as is the ability of a personally programmed media player to meaningfully surprise with a category of programming not already chosen (or *shuffled*) by the user. While Reith’s achievements occurred in a wholly different era of innovation, his recognition that the service dimensions of public broadcasting could be entrenched into a medium’s communicative rhythms is key. The producers of the Third Network understood that management of the medium’s rhythms could engender the kind of focused listening necessary to absorb the complexity of the extended plays, lectures, and musical compositions it was committed to showcasing. Their experimentation with scheduling therefore came in opposition to the formatting and seriality standard to broadcasting flows by the 1940s. Media institutions adapting new technologies must not forget that broadcast scheduling remains an elastic form which is just as able to give rise to disciplined yet inspired programming conceits as it is to fragmented and routine ones. As more and more broadcasters embrace the liberating

potential of on-demand media, confidence in and patience for conventional radio will depend on how its producers and programmers choose to liberate *it* from the effects of decades of standardization. It will also depend upon how radio re-purposes its flows towards educative and cohesive ends, since it is most likely that it is these objectives of public broadcast radio which will be the most compromised in the coming years.

Notes

¹ Specific to a Canadian historical context, we can point to the first nationwide broadcast on July 1st, 1927 as marking a critical moment in Canadian radio history as it signalled (or rekindled) a new era of authority and activities of government being communicated to an assemblage of citizens addressed simultaneously as audiences. That day's Diamond Jubilee celebrations on Parliament Hill were broadcast using stations of the Canadian National Railway Radio service and an assortment of telegraph and telephone companies. The broadcast was heralded in newspapers as an achievement of both science and government, significantly because it allowed Ottawa officials to be heard across the Dominion. The Toronto *Globe* reported, "radio is a democratic science, ready to instruct and entertain all manner and conditions of humankind who prepare to receive its blessings" (Nash 1994: 49). Graham Spry, who was present at the ceremony, also remarked on the significance of the occasion for ushering in a new era of citizens' relationship to government, "it is doubtful if ever before those in authority were brought into such immediate and sympathetic personal touch with those from whom their authority derived (...) As a result of this...there will be aroused a more general interest in public affairs and an increased devotion of the individual citizen to the common weal" (Nash 1994: 49).

² Drawing upon contemporary Nordic media theory, Jauert (2003) describes three "archaeological layers" (Jauert 2003: 189) of public service communications. The first is the facilitation and management of broadcasting as a public utility; the second is broadcasting as public service tied to enlightenment goals; and the final is public service as it relates to serving the audience as "consumers of media content" (Jauert 2003: 189).

³ Restrictions on broadcast hours curtailed the development of regular and serial programming, and consequently, the integrity of Canadian broadcasting since it was to the appreciably more continuous and lucrative American stations that Canadians turned for entertainment fare. As numerous studies of Canadian broadcasting history have evidenced (Hindley 1977; Vipond 1992; Raboy 1990), loyalty to these formats was, for many Canadians, cemented well before royal and federal commissions finally began to address a cultural and national need for a Canadian broadcasting system. The enshrinement of the electromagnetic spectrum as a public resource in 1932 enabled the management of broadcasting in the public interest.

⁴ Established in 1987 as a weekly forty-minute radio broadcast from Austria's ORF network, kunsradio is a platform for original work for radio by visual, sound and multi-media artists who represent a growing league of 'radio artists' whose aim is to explore and document changing forms of the radio medium. The program's website, launched in 1995, maintains an archive of this radio art, distributes CDs and program catalogues and provides links to lectures and forums for artists, public radio producers and academics with an interest in the acoustic arts. Kunsradio is associated with the Ars Austica

(Acoustic Arts) expert group of the European Broadcasting Union. In 1996, kunsradio began live web broadcasting and in 2005 began a weekly podcast. Administered by Atlantic Public Media and based in Massachusetts, Transom.org is dedicated to showcasing public radio documentary and providing technical and creative assistance to radio documentary makers. To this end, it offers information on a range of recording and editing devices as well as feature interviews with public radio hosts, producers, and editors. In 2004, transom was the first website to receive the prestigious Peabody award.

⁵ For their part, conventional broadcasters, including public broadcasters, have begun to supplement radio delivery with podcasts. In April 2005, the BBC (which in 2004 was the first British broadcaster to offer the service) announced that it would offer twenty of its popular terrestrial programs available for podcast. At the same time, it announced that it would employ peer-to-peer technology facilitated through its Interactive Media Player in order to make BBC Television and radio programs available for download within seven days of their broadcast (BBC 2005a). In Canada, the CBC has offered its long-running science program *Quirks and Quarks* for podcast, as well as highlights from its Toronto morning show, *Metro Morning*, and its independent music and youth initiative, *CBC Radio 3*.

⁶ Interestingly, when wireless telephony was first developed, its broadcasting potential was considered an unfortunate side effect. BBC founder, John Reith acknowledged the medium's confounding abilities – “wireless” Reith wrote in 1924 “is manifestly dependent for its functioning upon the universal ether, a fascinating but illusive, and probably incomprehensible, medium” (Peters 1999: 103).

⁷ In switching on a car radio for forty minutes in between errands, for example, the content of program components may be less important than their usefulness in schematizing a day or ‘filling’ time. It follows that a listener who is attendant to *CBC Radio's Ideas* arguably cannot necessarily be said to be accruing any more pro-social benefits in his or her media consumption than that of someone employing a commercial light music station as background music.

⁸ Additionally, Schafer has also called for a phenomenological approach to broadcasting in which “situations be presented as they occur without the interruption of sponsors, clocks or editorial manipulation” (Schafer 1993: 134).

⁹ For his part, Brecht suggested offsetting the alienating effects of the medium by conceiving for it an emancipatory public and social role. “It should not only make the listener listen,” Brecht said of radio in 1928, “but also talk - not isolating him but placing him into a context. Radio has to give up its position as a distributor and instead organize the listener as distributor” (Jauert 2002: 135).

¹⁰ See Douglas' *Inventing American Broadcasting: 1899-1922* (1997) for insight into the development of radio broadcasting in America. What McLuhan (1964) describes as the “hectic vivacity” (McLuhan 1964: 268) of the American system, as compared to the BBC and the CBC, is owed to the likes of radio pioneer, Lee De Forest, adapting programming formats innovated by amateurs within an advertisement-driven model.

¹¹ Several studies of Canadian radio history have also recognized the relationship between Radio Branch regulation around on-air content and the negative impact this had on attempts to generate daily broadcasting content (Johnston 1992; Vipond 1992). As evidenced by Russell T. Johnston in “The Origins of Public Broadcasting in Canada Reconsidered: The Radio Branch and Cultural Administration 1922-1932” (1992), “radio policy {in Canada in the 1920s} reflected the Romantic inclinations of the culture at large. The aesthetic objections of radio purists to advertising, and of musicians to mechanical reproductions, were certainly informed by Romantic notions of art” (Johnston 1992: 189). The variety of voices which at once comprised and lobbied the Branch included a number of nationalist (such as the Canadian Author’s Association) and church groups and musicians who had very different opinions on whether Canadian radio ought to be like the British system, wholly public and ‘paternalistic’ or a republican model maintained by private patronage. The romantic orientations that Johnston describes were partly attributable to an elitist and intellectual devotion to traditional, *live* concert performance (perhaps most significantly religious music) that translated into apprehension over the use of gramophone recordings and mechanically operated musical instruments (the pianola and hurdy-gurdy among them). The characterization of these instruments as suspicious on account of their crude reproduction of musical melodies resulted in a partial ban, beginning in 1922, of their use during peak ‘listening-in’ hours (7:30 to 11 pm each evening). This ban would continue, in varying manifestations, until the early 1930s.

¹² Years before his Conservative government approved the establishment of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission or CRBC (later the CBC) Mackenzie King, in a November 1926 British radio lecture entitled *The Problems of Canada*, lauded {the} British Broadcasting {Company’s} achievements in the regard:

it seems to me that the British method of regulating the use of radio for the public entertainment has much to commend it...The radio programs which are published from day to day do impress me as being maintained on a very high order of excellence. They furnish evidence to me that the British people have not succumbed so completely as they have in some other parts of the world to the craze for jazz and the jangle of some modern dance music. The British radio public is, indeed, to be congratulated upon having the air kept largely free from the clangour of discordant noises” (Nash 1994: 47)

While King’s disdain applies here to aesthetics of popular music, one might also consider his appraisal of British radio’s management of noise in the scope of a radio broadcasting philosophy that sought to avoid standardization through its scheduling practices.

¹³ Bourdieu’s term of ‘cultural intermediaries’, is invoked by Hendy (2000b) to describe the function of radio organizations which stand “at the fulcrum of a two-way relationship between artists and audiences by {in Bourdieu’s words} ‘constantly contributing to the production of and then reorganizing, circulating and mediating the words, sounds, and images of popular music to audiences across a range of entertainment media and cultural texts’” (Hendy 2000b: 748).

¹⁴ It should be noted that in their powers to select, prioritize and evaluate, institutional bodies charged to administer cultural remits may be said to operate within what Hawkins (1999) terms a 'quality paradigm.' In public broadcast programming, the quality paradigm is the process by which discourses of value are employed to justify programming. This discourse of value represents "the institutional and discursive practices that work to rank, distinguish, and attribute status to certain cultural forms and practices and the audiences that recognize and enjoy these" (Hawkins 1999: 176).

¹⁵ Of course, a range of program effects are also integral to signifying the authority or gravity of broadcast content. Principle among the acoustic shorthand inherent to radio production would be the effect of voice and language, notably the re-articulation of everyday speech into perfectly scripted and enunciated broadcast speech -in this case the King's English.

¹⁶ Indeed, as early as 1924, Reith had set up the Central Education Advisory Committee to instruct on delivery to school programs.

¹⁷ The hallmark of primary, appointment listening could perhaps no better be exemplified than by the BBC Radio Times' recommendation for ideal listening. The Times offered that listeners should best prepare for an evening's programming by sitting in an armchair with the radio turned off several minutes prior to tuning into a musical performance in order to imagine "oneself present in the room with the few performers, as if overhearing friends playing music together" (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 371).

¹⁸ A critical view of Haley's Cultural Pyramid approach must acknowledge its contribution to the perceived dichotomy between public and commercial values where the former is privileged (in traditional public broadcasting discourses) through its association with educative and aesthetic objectives while instantly gratifying fare is attributed to commercial production. The arrangement of programming according to 'graduated' schemes of listening does, admittedly, perpetuates a rhetoric in which the public service viewer is assumed to be "engaged in a quite a different technology of the self, predicated on the capacity to manage and delay pleasure in the interests of a more mature, complex and civilized response. This rejection of pleasure in the interest of pleasure in the interests of value involves sublimation (...) moralism, and a hierarchical ranking of {televsual} forms and audiences in which those who {watch} 'quality' are implicitly constituted as better or superior" (Hawkins 1999: 177).

¹⁹ The pyramid model also inaugurated, appreciably more than the BBC had endured up to that point, public and critical arguments over the merits of minority or elite broadcasting which would persist in debates over public broadcasting -in Britain and elsewhere- for years to come. Assessing feasibility of programming was therefore made difficult by debates over whether listener interest was sufficient to justify the Third's existence, perceived by many to be unnecessarily *recherché*.

²⁰ Although secondary listening had ostensibly always occurred in tandem to primary listening of the medium, the transistor radio extended this facility and made it much more common (particularly among younger radio listeners who had begun to tune into the rock and roll fare broadcast by the countless pirate radio stations operating from ships and islands around the British coast). By privileging mobility, the transistor radio introduced

a new interface between the listener and his or her environment, an environment in which radio programmers increasingly understood content to play a background role. Continuous music programming seemed preferable to radio's new use as a portable mass medium. Television's dominance in the evening hours hastened the decline of serious radio listening. As Crisell maintains, and further to Abrams (1964), "in these circumstances (...) Haley's tripartite cultural pyramid was suspect in theory as well as in practice, for it presupposed listeners at a time when the radio audience consisted increasingly of hearers" (Crisell 1986: 33).

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**2:
CBC RADIO 3:
A DISQUIETING RADIO REVOLUTION**

Introduction

Setting the Context

While recognition of changing audience demographics and applications of technology are required of any mass media institution, this recognition is fundamentally critical to the legitimacy of public broadcasting institutions as they exist within a broader media environment. The organizational identity and competencies of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) are, at any given time, looked to as measures of the relative strength or weakness of public broadcasting as a normative ideal of mass communications in Canada. In tandem to meeting out its service commitments, the CBC is routinely expected to justify its programming and strategic practices in terms of their fulfilment of its social and civic responsibilities. In an essay on Finnish public broadcasting traditions, Lowe (1999) suggests that

the legitimacy of a public service approach to and practice in broadcasting continues to be vigorously challenged. This is fundamentally a debate about legitimacy that is keyed to differences in social, political and cultural perspectives (...) the essence of such a conflict hinges on the degree to which public service broadcasting remains socially relevant and legitimate. To the extent that it does enjoy continuing or strengthening legitimacy, a decisive element is rooted in the strongly cultural agenda that tends to frame the enterprise (Lowe 1999: 13).

The CBC's numerous service enterprises were addressed at length during its Canadian Radio-Television & Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) license renewal hearings in 1999. Throughout, the corporation attempted to outline its strategic goals and cultural ambits of its chief programming practices. As senior managers and executives argued at the time, the CBC's legitimacy partially hinged upon its readiness to be competitive

within a new media environment *and* an environment where its existing services needed to attract younger Canadians. While recognition of its aging audiences had been articulated well before the late 1990s, it was in anticipation of tabling its license renewals and service proposals that the CBC's English Radio service drafted an application for a wholly new broadcast network.

The Youth Radio Network, or Radio 3, was included as a component of an ambitious 'constellation of services' strategy touted as a legacy project of the CBC's outgoing President, Perrin Beatty. This brief case study explores the evolution of CBC Radio 3 from a proposed broadcast radio network to its current manifestation on radio, the Internet, and as of December 2005, subscription satellite radio. I suggest that since the shelving of the Youth Radio application in 2000, unstable institutional (including financial) support for and recognition of Radio 3 has fostered an organizational climate privileging experimentation. The advantages of this are appreciated in Radio 3's use of multi-media platforms for programming innovation. However, from its inception, the stability of Radio 3's diverse operations has continually been questioned. Since the Youth Radio Plan was abandoned, Radio 3 has maintained its goal to produce a twenty-four hour radio service, whether on satellite or the Internet. This has contributed to an internal culture that has affirmed creativity and change because of uncertainty over the long-term prospects for the service as a whole. In sum, these issues have complicated Radio 3's name awareness within the CBC and the public audience more broadly.

Research Methods

Appropriate to this inquiry into the institutional characteristics of CBC Radio 3, secondary research was gathered using policy documents, transcripts of CBC/CRTC

hearings and CBC annual reports. News releases, academic papers, historical documents and writing pertaining to the foundation of CBC Radio services and CBC Radio Two were also reviewed. This research informs not only an understanding of CBC Radio 3's varied operations, but also knowledge of Radio 3 within the broader programming and policy histories of the CBC's English Radio Services, and the CBC's mandate more generally. Primary research was conducted through in-depth interviews with current and former CBC Radio and CBC Radio 3 executives, managers and producers in Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. Since this essay aims to document elements of the institutional history of Radio 3, it is generously interview-based. Insight from organizational research into media institutions was also provided by Kung-Shankleman's text *Inside the BBC and CNN: Managing Media Organizations* (2000). Shankleman builds upon theoretical research conducted by Schein (1992) into media management. Significantly, strategic concepts such as institutional competencies and organizational missions are explored in this essay. Added to this are issues which impact upon the self-image of both managers and creative teams within a media organization: name awareness; confidence in the goals of the organization, perception of support for innovation and support within the institution more broadly. In the case of Radio 3, this line of inquiry is exceptionally useful given the seemingly manifold evolutions of the service's operations in its brief yet colourful history.

Case Study

The Youth Radio Network

In 1996, Adrian Mills, the CBC Radio's Director of Programming insisted that "if people are interested in information, then they'll enjoy CBC Radio. Our current affairs programs are not designed to exclude listeners 18 to 34, nor are they designed to pander to listeners 50+ (...) the studies we've done show that the majority of men and women in this age group {18 to 34} aren't interested in current affairs (Ryerson Review of Journalism Summer 1996). Since Mills did not see a need for a revamp of Radio One programming at this time, it was acknowledged that if the CBC were to pursue younger audiences, it would have to do so with a separate service entirely. Though the idea of pursuing younger audiences was not a new one, by the late nineties there was greater political will for a new network amongst senior management such as Alex Frame, head of English Radio and Harold Redekopp, the Vice-President of English Radio. By October 1998, the CBC had submitted an application to the CRTC proposing a third national over the air FM service, the Youth Radio Network or Radio Three as it was also known.¹ In March of the following year, *Our Commitment to Canadians, the CBC's Strategic Plan* was released in anticipation of CRTC hearings into the renewal of all CBC broadcasting licenses. In the CBC's Annual report of 1998-1999, Radio 3 was promoted as a "unique niche radio service, {that} would provide music and other programming designed specifically to appeal to a younger audiences, which is not currently served by commercial or public radio in Canada" (CBC 1999). This Youth Radio Network was primarily targeted at 15 to 24 year-old listeners and it was hoped that aspiring journalists and broadcasters of this age group would be able to assist in filing and reporting stories.

At the time the application was drafted there was seen to be a strong need to re-capture radio audience share among younger Canadians. It was evidenced that “in the 1970’s, 10% of Canadians between the ages of 15 and 25 listened to CBC Radio {while a} 1997 survey found that CBC Radio only {attracted} 1% of that youth audience” (Friends of Canadian Broadcasting 1999). In the late 1990s, research into Canadian radio listening habits evidenced an overall decline in AM and FM radio listening by youth. A report commissioned by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters revealed that private radio saw a drop from 12.2 hours a week in 1990 to 10.4 in 1997. For 18 to 34 year-olds in the period between 1990-1997, the average number of hours tuned into to private radio declined, for men from 19.8 hours to 19.5 and for women from 19.7 to 18 (CAB 1998). As articulated by Susan Englebert, the first manager of Radio 3 and CBC New Media, “many young people are not even aware of the CBC. Although some may come to us when they mature, many people would never experience our programming because they don’t know about us. If you catch them when they are young, they may come back or move to our other services” (Block 2000). An even more persuasive argument is suggested by Leys in *Market-Driven Politics: Neo-Liberal Democracy and the Public Interest* (2001). Leys cites a 2000 *Guardian* article lamenting prospects for the BBC’s future audiences and talent, “the cultural difference between the over 30’s and the 20 somethings are wider than ever (...) It would be ironic if, in a year’s time, millions of pensioners and middle-aged viewers who want public service television can’t get it because the people who make programs have no idea how to provide it (Leys 2001: 161)?” The implications of this statement are critical. Public broadcasters must consider the appeal of programming for younger audiences not simply for the sake of expanding

their reach, but because their long term institutional growth and stability depends upon it. Audiences who are sensitive to the distinctiveness of programming initiated in the public interest may also be made up of creative talent capable of working towards these ends. In 1996, Mills implied that audiences would mature into CBC programming over time. Yet, by the late 1990s, it was clear that waiting on this maturation was not an effective policy goal with respect to courting new audiences. The realities of the new media era required that the CBC commit itself to generating a new creative pool. Only then would younger audiences see their realities and multifaceted media worlds reflected in the CBC.

The Youth Radio Strategy: New Talent and Audiences

The CBC's key strategic plan tabled before the CRTC in 1999 was described as a 'constellation of services' model and keyed the continued strength of public broadcasting to a need to expand the *shelf-space* of Canadian programming. In addition to the Youth Network, a French news radio network, InfoRadio, was planned along with six other services, including four French-language and two English-language specialty services available through cable and satellite. Beatty told the CRTC in 1999:

as our colleagues in other countries understand very clearly, no public broadcaster can remain relevant or continue to reach and serve new audiences unless it reaches out aggressively and innovatively to explore and embrace the new digital technologies that are revolutionizing how we produce and deliver programs and services (Beatty June 9 1999 CRTC).

Critical to achieving these aims was the need for CBC Radio to bring in new kinds of talent. Citing the success of the short-form Radio One documentary program *Outfront*, Alex Frame, told the CRTC that since its introduction in 1997 approximately 100 new voices had been featured on air (Frame June 2 1999). Regional and national initiatives to

increase the talent pool of broadcast freelancers had raised this number to well over 500 new voices on CBC Radio. As Frame contended, “it is our view that unless we can continue to proactively bring new voices into the system, we will not be accurately reflecting this country back to itself” (Frame June 2 1999). Frame and Beatty also articulated a concern that, should the CBC fail to innovate accordingly in the new media environment, the strength of the entire radio system would be in jeopardy. Recalling his role as a young CBC producer in the mid 1960s, Frame reminded the CRTC that had it not been for the changes made to radio production and scheduling at that time, the national radio service would have become “irrelevant” (Frame June 2 1999). Betraying his personal connection to and awareness of CBC Radio’s profound history, Frame remarked, “I fear, given the nature of the changes that are occurring now that there is danger that that could happen again” (Frame June 2 1999).

Hell is a place where you have to hear Morningside 24 hrs a day”
– Geoff Pevere during a broadcast of his CBC Radio program *Prime Time* in January 1993. (Ryerson Review of Journalism: Summer 1996)

Irrespective of Pevere’s quip, in the mid to late 1990’s radio management invoked the legacy of Peter Gzowski, the esteemed CBC Radio host of *Morningside*, and before that, *This Country in the Morning*, as they determined the goals and character of a new network. Both Alex Frame and Harold Redekopp had been at the CBC since the late 1960s and early 1970s, the period of CBC’s hallowed and mythic *radio revolution*. In the late 1990s, it was felt that the Gzowski programs had, above all else, stimulated a sense of national connectivity that was lamentably missing amongst a new generation of Canadians. Accordingly, in May 2004 Harold Redekopp (who would take the helm of

President of CBC Television from the mid-nineties until his retirement in Fall 2004)

recalled the ambition of the Youth Radio Network as such:

I realized it would be impossible to serve a classical, jazz audience same as a popular music audience. I just wasn't going to work. Both sides were going to be disappointed. So we persuaded our board of directors at that time that they should support this initiative for Radio Three, we said we would find a new way, an inexpensive way of launching the service but at that point it was over the air. It would have an online or a web component but its manifestation would be over the air. It would be lower cost and what it would achieve- and here was the point we were going to make – *it would achieve for a younger audience what Peter Gzowski had achieved for an older audience*. That is between an interesting mix of music, popular music and conversation and information we would bring together Canadians from coast to coast – a younger demographic very much like we had an older demographic on *Morningside*. So that was really the genesis of Radio Three and quite frankly, I guess our concern was that we were facing an aging population in radio, just generally we were. Audiences are getting older and it's not that they are not valued, but what are we doing about the next generation of listener's coming up. The old proverb had always been people went away for a period of time but as they matured they'd come back to CBC radio. There was absolutely no evidence that that was still happening today. People that had grown up in the rock and roll era might never come to CBC, they might find other rock stations and never come to the CBC and therefore it was important to find some way of connecting young Canadians to the CBC and we felt Radio Three was the answer. I would say it was concern for an aging population and more guarantee that if we didn't do something dramatic we couldn't find young people to come to radio over time. (Redekopp May 2004).

Complicating the issue for the CRTC, however, was the CBC's strategy to broaden the appeal of Radio One to younger listeners at the same time that Radio Three was being put forward. Why, the CRTC asked, was a separate radio service required when it was ostensibly possible to reach the same audience through a skilful redress of core Radio One programming and promotional strategies? The answer, according to the proponents of Radio Three, lay in a meaningful difference between what constituted younger listeners for Radio One, and what constituted younger listeners within the population more broadly. As Frame contended, an achievable *younger* demographic for Radio One

was actually those aged 35 to 49 years. At best, a secondary target of 25 to 34 was possible for Radio One, however, as Frame contended, under-served audiences aged 15 to 25 years could only be addressed through a separate network. The explanation for this lay in the appreciably “edgier” (Frame June 2 1999) programming Radio Three would be expected to produce.

The Youth Radio Strategy: Scheduling Tensions

In addition to \$6 million in new funding the CBC had secured from its senior management and board of directors for a new network, CBC Radio intended to migrate funds from existing Radio Two programs targeted at younger audiences. Frame told the CRTC in June 1999, “once Radio Three is up and running, God willing (...) we will no longer have *Brave New Waves* or *Radiosonic* on Radio Two. So that programming will move over and (...) will be replaced with programming more appropriate to that network and at a lower cost” (Frame June 9 1999). Management’s strong inclination to remove these programs from Radio Two was attributable to scheduling tensions on the service that had frustrated opportunities to broaden that service’s audience base. As Jenke observes, “the situational context of listening reassures listeners that they have come to the right place” (Jenke in Wedell 1991: 114). The authors of the Youth Radio application recognized that the relegation of contemporary and independent Canadian music to the margins of weeknight and weekend listening blocks did not represent a successful programming policy for attracting new audiences or supporting new artists and talent. Many Radio Two listeners considered Saturday evening indie rock, pop and punk music programs such as *RadioSonic* and *Night Line* anathema to the sensibilities of a predominately classical and light jazz service. This tension was duly dubbed an ‘irritation

factor.’ The *irritant* was presumably the sonic dissonance experienced by older Radio Two audience during the Saturday changeover from *Saturday Afternoon at the Opera* to *RadioSonic*, and likewise, by younger listeners tuning in to hear experimental music only to discover the jazz program, *After Hours*. Redekopp summed the issue as follows:

I think what you want to do in radio is you want not to disappoint, you want to have a consistent sound, you want people to stay and be part of a family and know what to expect anytime of the day that you tune in. So when classical or jazz lovers are tuning into some pop music that they usually find abhorrent, they’re turned off, do it too many times and they won’t come back. Ditto, by the way, for the pop audiences who are sickened, you know they think they’ve got a channel that’s for them and they hear a lot of classical music or jazz, smoky jazz music, and they don’t come back either. So that’s the irritation factor. The irritation factor is often the strongest with Radio One. The strength of Radio One is that it is information based and what it has in common is spoken word – you might be interested in a topic, or not, but you are never put off by the spoken word because that’s what {the kind of network} it is. Add the element of music and you will turn off people. And in fact an older audience that is enjoying a conversation about young people’s lifestyles, that’s not a problem. But put on their music after that and there is a high irritation factor. Now I don’t know if we are still getting letters but we used to get lots and lots of letters, we used to get more letters often about the type of music we played on the information shows than the information itself. The group that was puzzled were the people that were the more occasional listeners and they didn’t quite get it, that a service would switch its brand, its format immediately. And so they would be quite confused actually and wasn’t very useful in terms of building new audience members. There would then be these major irritants that would continue to be there and would confuse, perplex, and it would be very difficult to build new audiences. So not only were we not serving young people very well on the existing networks but there was, for new listeners to the services, a kind of confusion and to some degree a piss off factor. (Redekopp May 2004).

Put in another way, Philip Savage, head of Strategic Planning at CBC Radio and co-author of the Youth Radio application, notes management’s recognition that people did not listen to radio in such a way that “the 68 year-old would clear out at 6 or 7 o’clock on a Saturday evening and along would come the 24 year-olds. It’s the old notion that people can watch TV horizontally but they listen to radio vertically, they follow through on the

one channel” (Savage May 2004). For many years, this awareness that listeners did so often rely on a *single* radio service for both primary and secondary listening resulted in scheduling strategies attempting to balance the duty of an arts and culture service with the realities of listening habits. The English Radio Development Project of 1983 included the first comprehensive review to include programming strategies for the FM or Stereo network, as it was then dubbed.² Even then, Radio Two’s reputation as a narrowcast classical music network was acknowledged as an impediment to attracting broader audiences. The report suggested that:

evenings should be used to fulfil that part of our programming mandate that does not require producers to develop audiences of the size and range of prime time periods (...) CBC Radio needs places in the schedules where producers can develop their own ideas and challenge their own ideas and challenge their own abilities away from the pressures of mainstream thinking (...) so let us experiment in low audience periods with no immediate expectations. Let us encourage experimentation within objectives and standards set by management. In this regard a move to all-night radio is essential. It will provide opportunities, now in very short supply on existing schedules, for vital program and talent development (CBC 1983: 53, 56).

This programming strategy resulted in the development of *Brave New Waves* in 1984, a late-night experimental and avant-garde electronic, rock and pop music program that was (symbolically) placed under the umbrella of Radio 3’s operations in 2002. While the programs slated to be relocated to the Youth network in the late nineties occupied time slots that had long been the reserve of rock and contemporary music programming (such as the Vancouver-based *Great Canadian Goldrush*, which aired late nights on CBC AM and FM in the seventies and eighties), the authors of the application understood that younger listeners were not tuning into radio in such a way that they would wait for a scheduled program or programming block. As Susan Englebert argued to the CRTC, “it

is extremely difficult for us to attract a young audience who tend to listen to radio in a stream. They don't look at their watch and say 'oh, it is Saturday night, seven o'clock, the opera is finished, I shall tune in and listen to Canadian music.' The listening patterns just don't work that way" (Englebert June 2 1999). By the mid to late nineties, then, radio management felt that they had exhausted the capacity of Radio Two's broadcast schedules to reflect a more eclectic range of music programming, and to that end as well, musical components of Radio One. And yet this collision of tastes would persist as the Youth Radio application was withdrawn and CBC Radio repositioned itself towards a bifurcation of its proposed Radio Three programming onto a new platform.

CBC Radio 3: The Beginning

In November 1999, just two months before the CRTC was to consider the Youth Radio Application, the application was shelved. Alex Frame announced that he and the CBC's new president, Robert Rabinovitch had asked the CRTC to defer the application. It was stated that all expansion plans related to the constellation of services strategy were under review pending the CRTC's decisions on license renewals of the CBC's existing services. Above all else, Rabinovitch cited cost-effectiveness for the decision, "before starting to spend more money on another service, with its own license and transmitters, we'll want to restore some of the integrity and quality to Radio One and Radio Two (...) the possibility of a third radio network has not been ruled out entirely, but merely postponed" (Globe and Mail 1999).³ Frame put it more succinctly, "moving ahead with Radio Three would really be putting the cart before the horse" (Friends 1999). The former manager of Radio 3 (Englebert retired from the CBC soon after Radio 3 was launched), Robert

Ouimet has questioned the argument that the network was shelved because it was not financially viable:⁴

oddly they have flouted a specialty television channel in the meantime, Country Canada, which has roughly the same budget that was proposed for Radio 3 and they've done a number of other undertakings in the same time period such as {the 24 hour digital/cable pay audio channel} *Galaxie* (...) I mean the CBC is a billion dollar corporation and it can afford to do a lot of things. They weren't going to get any new money for it and it was never proposed with the issue that it would so it was really a political will issue and with the new president, he wasn't willing to fight for it" (Ouimet September 2004).

Ouimet does, however, acknowledge that the application was a "long shot" (Ouimet: September 2004). Ouimet, who worked in radio for more than twenty years, had left the CBC briefly after preparing the original proposal for the network to the CBC's board of directors though did return to work on the application. With the application shelved, Ouimet, to his credit, remained at the CBC and vigorously pursued the new media innovations that he and a host of new media producers had been experimenting with for some time.

CBC Radio 3 & CBC R3.com

Schein, who has written at length on the link between an organization's internal culture and the overall effectiveness of its strategies observes that, "founders not only choose the basic mission and the environmental context in which the new group will operate, but they choose the group members and bias the original responses that the group makes in its efforts to succeed in its environment and to integrate itself" (Schein in Shankleman 2000: 15). This assessment is well suited to describe the accomplishments of Radio 3's innovators as they interpreted a new mission and character for the defunct Youth Radio

application. From Vancouver, Ouimet, along with a team that included Susan Englebert, Bert Cervo, Anton Leone, Grant Lawrence and Loc Dao, revived the new media initiatives that had been touted as essential supplements to the Youth Radio Network. In addition to his radio work, Ouimet had worked on CBC new media since the mid-nineties. In 1994, Ouimet was among the producers of Radio Two's *RealTime*, a Saturday evening radio program that aired live in every time zone. The program also had an Internet component, allowing listeners to chat during the broadcast about features and in many cases, according to Ouimet, communicate with hosts as to the quality of guests or musical selections. Significantly, in 1995 *RealTime* employed the new RealNetworks' real-time encoded software, serving the first *live* global interactive broadcast. As Ouimet recalls, "we did a lot of pioneering work with *RealTime*, quite a bit of very early interaction with radio and web and that really helped us around Radio 3 ideas because we had experience doing it, we knew how it worked and we had an infrastructure to deliver it (...) we knew we could build a community of interest online" (Ouimet September 2004). Ouimet maintains that the sum of this was critical to showing senior management that new production and pull technologies not only existed, but represented the future of how radio and television services would be resourced, "all of that stuff helped demonstrate that there was something going on there because the Internet was not understood at the CBC at all in those days, *not at all*. Among senior management, I mean I would have meetings with them where they just said this is going nowhere so, any work that was done helped the case" (Ouimet September 2004).

After the application was jettisoned, the Vancouver new media and radio team, key among them Grant Lawrence, the producer of *RadioSonic* and *Radio Escapades*⁵,

convinced senior management to reconsider the new media platform that had been included by Beatty in his constellation strategy. In presenting his vision of the strategy, Beatty had acknowledged new media as a critical supplement to the Youth Radio network:

{our intent is} to move out of studios, to decentralize dramatically and to put into the hands of individuals much more creative control than ever at any time in our history. What we are seeing taking place (...) is literally a re-invention of the medium that requires us to go back to the drawing board and rethink how we conceive it (...) Radio Three is conceived from the outset as programming in bitstream, not as conventional radio in the sense that we may have thought of it in the 1960s or 1970s. It is designed to be interactive. It is designed to use both conventional broadcast radio, but to use new technologies as well (Beatty June 2 1999).

Since *RadioSonic* had maintained a supplementary website for several years, well before other CBC programs (with the exception of Radio One's *Definitely Not The Opera*), the template it and *RealTime* provided no doubt contributed to the idea that Radio 3 be based in Vancouver. As Ouimet recalls:

we had a lot of research - we had spent a lot of money on research. We also knew from the beginning that the Internet was a huge piece of the puzzle and by that time we had nothing to lose, basically by that point the thing was dead and we knew that the President was coming out to Vancouver in a couple of months and we booked a meeting with him and decided, 'let's pitch him on a service that tries to do the same thing but does it in a different form and that's on the Internet. It will be cheaper, we don't have to get licenses and we can make it ourselves. We have nothing to lose' (...) We talked about what we would do if it was on the Internet, what are the core elements of this thing and how do we translate that into an Internet service? So that's where the three main ideas came from. The idea of a user generated content piece because of this notion of producer-consumer was quite central to the Radio 3 idea. A site for music uploads which became *newmusiccanada* and then *justconcerts* because CBC Radio has always recorded bands so we thought that was a nice showcase for that kind of activity. So did an hour and half presentation for the President and after that he gave us a million and a half dollars. This came directly from him for the website and then we got a bunch of radio time which came from the associated budgets. No extra money" (Ouimet September 2004).

Radio 3's first project was the creation of 120seconds.com, launched in Fall 2000. Billed as a storytelling site, audiences were encouraged to submit short films, animation, and, to a lesser extent, acoustic documentary pieces. All could be accessed using Flash or RealPlayer video. Also launched were *justconcerts.com* (streaming live concerts and CBC studio sessions with Canadian independent musicians) and *newmusiccanada.com*, now the largest collection of {non-downloadable} Canadian music on the Internet. It was around this time that late night programming on Radio Two began to be aired under the designation, Radio 3. Beginning at seven o'clock until 4 a.m. on Saturdays, and midnight to 4 a.m. on Sundays, Radio 3's programming block has included programs such as *RadioSonic*, *Radio Escapades*, and *One Night Stand*, along with music submitted via *justconcerts*, and *newmusiccanada*'s studio sessions. Interspersed between music and interviews with musicians may be brief spoken word segments produced by Radio 3 staff and guest contributors. In 2002, the weekly output of *Brave New Waves* (produced in Montreal) would fall under Radio 3's banner, increasing Radio 3's radio airtime to 33 hours a week.⁶ In November 2002, a portal to these sites (which now includes the traditional folk and Celtic music site *rootmusiccanada.com*, launched in January 2003 in partnership with CBC Radio One), *cbcR3.com* was launched. The multimedia site served as a weekly web magazine or digest, featuring poetry, fiction, photography, profiles on Canadian arts communities, artists, musicians and a variety of articles with accompanying spoken word audio (including streaming music selections voted upon by *newmusiccanada* audiences). Sean Embury, a new media producer at Radio 3 lauded in 2003 that "what distinguishes the magazine is the built in radio and the built in video, so it's also a chance to do innovative radio (...). It is about the extension of the magazine

format. You hear a live concert on the radio, but it's great when you can read a little story about the concert, see a picture of where the concert took place" (Embury April 2003). In August 2003, it was estimated that the Radio 3 magazine received 5.5 million views a month, approximately 400,000 to 500,000 visitors (Toronto Star August 2003).⁷ With a regular staff of approximately 25 and significant pool of freelance talent, Radio 3 had begun to reach new audiences in a manner that had barely been conceived during the time of the Youth Radio initiative.

CBC Radio 3 & Core Competencies

"This is a good thing for young Canadians to get a sense of themselves. That's the whole idea of it to me. What is it to be a young Canadian these days? What defines that and what's a good voice to {communicate} that, because we really don't have a unifying sense of that"

– cbcR3.com producer, Jeremy Mendes (Mendes October 2004)

What is clear from the preceding history of Radio 3 is that it arose from the ashes, as it were, of the Youth Radio plan not through directives from senior management, but through the ingenuity of a team of producers decidedly removed from CBC Radio operations in Toronto. As the first Radio 3 sites were launched in Fall 2000, *120seconds.com* producer Carla Livingston acknowledged confliction over whether Radio 3 was a platform for multimedia experimentation or an amalgam of sites mainly targeting youth, "we want to be all things to all people. But because the standards are so varied in the web world, we can't. The mission of *120seconds.com* is to create an experimental ground where we can figure out what the heck to do with this medium and it's a place for people our age to figure that out" (King's Journalism Review 2000).⁸

While the Youth Radio plan was premised on targeting younger demographics, producers at Radio 3 quickly developed appreciably more elastic conceptions of its audiences:

something that came along with {former executive producer of the web magazine} Rob McLaughlin's management was that the target audience is whoever is interested, which I like because I think a target audience concept is saying if you are 50 years old and you are looking or listening to us then there is something wrong with you cause look, all of the original punks are fifty, and can they not be included? That was a vanguard generation that basically set the tone for the next thirty years of culture so of course they are still welcome (Lawrence November 2004).

It was with this ethos in mind that Radio 3 innovated an organizational model, which, above all else, privileged connectivity between Radio 3, freelancers, musicians, and audiences across Canada. From the beginning, a challenge for Radio 3 was the question of how to establish relationships with audiences who, it was assumed, had little connection to CBC programming. The CBC (with the exception of *cbc.ca*) did not yet have a strong online presence and was therefore not in the minds of Internet audiences looking for contemporary arts, music, and culture coverage. In all of these respects, Radio 3 had to maintain technological and internal cultural competencies in order to be taken seriously by audiences *and* as a service extension of the national public broadcaster.

In *Inside the BBC and CNN: Managing Media Organizations* (2000), Shankleman describes competencies as:

distinctive organizational attributes that create sustainable competitive advantage and, critically, a platform for future growth (...) the roots of distinctive capabilities often extend back to the foundation of an organization, emerging originally as a means by which an organization could fulfil its primary mission. They are thus deeply embedded in culture, and contribute not only to competitiveness but also to the psycho-social 'glue' that creates identity, differentiation and cohesion Shankleman 2000: 21).

With this mind, several competencies of Radio 3 may be identified that explain its success in a range of areas. Its new media services, most importantly *justconcerts*, *newmusiccanada*, and the web magazine, *cbcR3*, were essential to providing an identity for Radio 3 amongst musicians and audiences. The use of multiple platforms for content aggregation and distribution (i.e. *newmusiccanada* and *justconcerts* provide content for Radio 3 on Radio Two and stories from the web magazine often featured audio components which were adapted for radio) allowed Radio 3 to fortify its radio block and direct audiences to its online service. Secondly, Radio 3 has benefited from hiring talent who have strong ties to (not just awareness of) independent music communities and artists. This has allowed to it invite acts in for studio sessions and interviews in, as I will describe below, a much more *guerrilla* manner than comparative music departments at Radio Two would be able to do. Related to this is the fact that Radio 3's base in Vancouver has afforded it a necessary distance from the sort of management interference that many CBC Toronto employees have bemoaned for decades (see Skene 1993; Nash 1994; Manera 1996). The following sections elaborate on how these features have informed Radio 3's competencies.

Competencies: Experimentation & Connections to Audiences

In 2003, Ouimet described Radio 3's production approach as being a disruption to the traditional 'funnel' model of media production wherein instead of content being dictated and generated by managers and producers and then delivered to audiences, online users (specifically musicians) and free-lancers contribute much of Radio 3's content (Ouimet April 2003). This process has provided Radio 3 with a generous depository of content that may be harnessed on its various media platforms. What Shankleman describes as

conventional media production processes: “acquiring or producing content; packaging (scheduling programs into channels); and distributing the packaged content to the end-users (transmission)” (Shankleman 2000: 41) have all been executed by Radio 3 in such a way that has provided it, for the most part, with great deal of independence from broader CBC operations. In the case of *newmusiccanada*, artists submit music, write their own copy, and can remove their music from the site at their will - according to Embury, “it’s their show” (Embury April 2003). For its part, *120seconds.com* (which has now been terminated) employed an audience driven ratings system in order to determine the most popular submissions. These were subject to editorial review and license negotiations before being purchased by and featured on Radio 3. Former executive producer of the magazine, Rob McLaughlin, once enthused, “we get a poet and combine his words with photographs and put music to it. I guess there are not a lot of places at the CBC where you can do those things” (Toronto Star August 2003). According to Ouimet, Radio 3’s facility in innovating formats and production methods has not been overshadowed by its core mission:

at the end of the day I think the technology is a bit irrelevant really. I think Radio 3 was always aggressive about being on top of technology but it’s not about technology it’s about relationships in community. All that technology does is to allow us to develop relationships with different communities that we can reach because we know that those communities don’t listen to CBC radio at all so the fact that they can have a bunch of people streaming pop music, I think that’s huge. I mean there is technology involved in that but it is kind irrelevant because they could be dialing it in (...) it doesn’t really matter (...) I actually think it’s hugely successful in fulfilling CBC’s mandate which is reaching all Canadians, whether they are 17 or 71 and whether they are in Regina or Vancouver. That there are 30 or 40 thousand songs at *newmusiccanada* that aren’t played on radio anywhere else is a huge, huge thing – it’s what culture is. It’s a place where people who make art can have their art seen and heard by other people, it’s amazing, and I think that’s fantastic. That to me is the equivalent of the Vancouver library (Ouimet September 2004).

As already suggested, the means by which Radio 3 achieved this legitimacy with artists and audiences alike is through a continual refresh of content, attributable to its diverse pool of freelancers from around the country and its capital amongst independent musicians and their respective audiences. As a member of the Vancouver-based indie pop punk band, The Smugglers, contributing producer and host of Radio 3 on Radio Two Grant Lawrence had first appeared on Radio Two programs such as *RealTime* and *Night Line* – hosted by former *Brave New Waves* host David Wisdom. Lawrence’s success as a radio personality and storyteller landed him a position at Radio Two in 1998.

Importantly, his connections to musicians and indie media publications across Canada, such as Toronto based *Exclaim!* Magazine and *Eye* weekly, afforded the CBC projects he became involved in with more credibility insofar as audiences could seemingly trust that Lawrence had a greater stake in and sensitivity around how non-mainstream artists were presented. Another example of Radio 3’s propensity to connect with audiences and musicians is suggested by an episode where two producers of the web magazine became aware of an unpublicized performance by the {then} relatively obscure Montreal band, The Unicorns. The band’s performance in an East Vancouver car wash was summarily recorded and photographed by these producers and uploaded to the web magazine and featured on Radio 3 on Radio Two.

The sum of these sensibilities went counter to what Lowe describes as the traditional programming and production objectives in which “public radio professionals serve their audiences by acting as facilitators of an inclusive cultural discourse which is nonetheless organized institutionally in relatively exclusive terms” (Lowe 1999: 19). One of Radio 3’s signature strengths has been its reputation as being uncharacteristic of

existing CBC programming schemes. In spring 2004, Radio 3 organized its first (and as yet only) Connect the Dots tour, a multi-city showcase of popular indie artists including a travelling photo-exhibition of photography from the web magazine. That spring also saw the release of a compilation CD, *CBC Radio 3 Sessions*, featuring performances culled from *justconcerts* and *newmusiccanada*. As McLaughlin stated in 2004, “all of the sudden we have this relationship with a whole community of artists that the CBC never had before. You know it is really easy to screw it up, and come across earnest and preachy. But thankfully we haven’t” (Toronto Star May 2004). And yet restraint with regards to its public communications has hindered Radio 3’s name awareness amongst a wider range of audiences and, notably, within the CBC.

Branding and Self-Image

From the outset, Radio 3 has had significant difficulties with its name awareness, perhaps most obviously having to do with the fact that its radio component is broadcast on Radio Two. Radio 3 is a producer of radio content, but also new media. Countless producers at Radio 3 have expressed frustration over this moniker. In this, the scheduling tensions cited by Redekopp and others in 1999 have only been heightened as Radio 3 expanded its Radio Two programming block. And yet Lawrence insists that

when {Radio 3} does come on there is always a lot of talk about easing the listener in but well, I don’t want to ease the listener in. When *RadioSonic* started, and when Radio 3 starts now I want it to be like a cold bucket of water in the face to whoever is listening. I want it to be starkly different and for the brand new song from Death From Above to rattle the speakers and kick start things and let’s get going, this is the music of *now*, you’ve just listened to the music of *then* and now let’s get going, it’s Saturday night. The thing is, irritation or not, the CBC has been accommodating enough to allow new music in that time slot for over ten years now, probably fifteen years so that’s great. That in itself is a long-standing tradition. Show names have changed and hosts have changed but there has

always been new music to be heard in that timeslot on Saturday night on Radio Two (Lawrence November 2004).

In an essay on Triple J (the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's youth network), Sarah Thornton reflects on the subcultural credibility secured by Triple J in the mid 1990s, "as Will Straw observes of 'hipness', 'what counts {as subcultural capital} is not simply a degree of knowledge but the amount of restraint with which it deployed or guarded'" (Thornton in Albury 1999: 59). Like Triple J's early on-air radio talent, Radio Three's radio hosts similarly may be said to speak in a "colloquial or 'non-radioese'" (Thornton in Albury 1999: 59) vocal style. Unlike Triple J, Radio 3 has not enjoyed a large pool of financial resources for publicizing its services. Costs include paying union scale to performers who contribute studio sessions to *justconcerts*. Radio 3 spends approximately \$150,000 a year on recording acts (Ouimet September 2004). This combination of financial constraints and an internal culture privileging rubrics of indie credibility has resulted in what many Radio 3 producers regrettably describe as a tendency to *preach to the converted*. As Don Pennington, a longtime producer at Radio Two (including *Great Canadian GoldRush*) and Radio Three admits:

we have a low profile outside of Toronto and Vancouver. That's entirely inadequate. It's not necessarily about resources. We have a radio station, we have a television station. We have lots of tools. We just never embraced a solid branding program that makes people go, 'what's Radio 3?' In my experience nobody knows who Radio 3 is and a matter of fact if you do know your inclination might be to say, 'I thought that was cancelled?' and that's a routine message I got. I was on the Connect the Dots tour and that was the message I got from coast to coast. Not because people are feeling smug about it but just they are saying 'it's great to have people here, could you please do this every month?' It is a resources issue but initially the marketing scheme for Radio 3 was one of a viral nature. It was, get it out into the community and people will talk to people and it will grow. That's fair. Within your own fan base and your own mindset, 'I'm going to tell you, you're going to tell me,' but it's not incremental.

And you're going to tell people to go to CBC Radio 3 on Radio Two and people just go to Radio Two (Pennington November 2004).

Lawrence has expressed a similar view of Radio 3's marketing weaknesses:

we've had to do almost everything by ourselves. Basically, they give us a budget every year, And I think that the CBC has been very generous with their budget, we've been able to do whatever the hell it is that we want to do and we create a lot of great stuff and we've been rewarded by that both the website and the radio show but I think that *our* unit from *within* has to spend a lot more time promoting it because let's face it, if you walk up to someone at a Fiery Furnaces show or a Controller Controller show and say 'what's CBC Radio 3?' chances are they will know. Chances are most of the 300 people at a show like that will know but if you ask someone at just a standard university campus they won't know, they'd have no idea. So that's failing right? I've often said CBC Radio 3 is like a secret club, you either know about it or you don't. I would much rather have people just know about it and choose whether they go to it or not, whether it's the radio or the site because you know we are creating a ton of amazing content and we are interviewing the best bands in the world on a week to week basis, but if nobody hears about it then what the fuck is the point? (Lawrence November 2004)

This relative obscurity has extended to Radio 3's profile in the CBC more broadly and has had a meaningful effect on member perceptions of the corporation's valuation of Radio 3's successes. Admittedly however, it would seem that both CBC management and Radio 3 staff contributed to this estrangement. Considering elusively defined qualities of hipness, Thornton again quotes Straw who has offered that it "confers a sense of not having to try to hard" (Thornton in Albury 1999: 59). In Radio 3's case, it would seem that a lack of promotional resources have only fortified the hipness which was already latent to its identity.

Institutional Support and Uncertainty

“Radio 3 is a team of people who produce stuff. We don’t really call ourselves a ‘production unit.’ It’s kind of a tough thing to pin down because we do so many things. Radio 3 is tied to numerous content properties (...) It’s a strategy and an approach to keep moving, and to keep fulfilling your mandate in as many ways as possible, and to try to reach people however they want to be reached, and to try to connect people however they want to be connected (...) In a sense it is about being light on your feet”
– Rob McLaughlin, Fall 2002 (*Broadcast Dialogue Magazine* 2002).

Touted in much of the press that it did receive as a “virtual community centre for the nation’s independent culture” (Toronto Star May 2004), in less than three years, Radio Three had won over 30 awards, including the People’s Voice Award in the radio category of 2003’s Webby Awards. In 2003, it won the New York Festival’s award for best radio programming format for Radio 3’s programming on Radio Two. It also won the Prix Italia, the world’s oldest radio competition in 2003. This marked the first time the CBC Radio had received the award since 1965. Numerous fans of the Radio 3 magazine exclaimed that they couldn’t believe that what they were seeing and listening to had been created by the CBC (McLaughlin 2003; Ouimet 2004). In spite of these recognitions, Ouimet has expressed disillusionment with the CBC’s support of Radio 3, attributing it to a combination of unawareness over both its character as an indie music and arts service and as a service heavily reliant on new media:

we created this little group, this really bizarre little group of people at the CBC who were generally all under thirty, who were working at computers, who weren’t schooled in classical music and traditional information programming, many of them came outside of the CBC and you know in a lot of circles were considered to be geeks, weirdos, kids who didn’t know anything. They had piercings, they weren’t all white, they were bizarre looking. They came in late, they stayed late, they played loud music, they had headphones on, and they were staring at computer screens and couldn’t possibly be doing anything useful right? And we hired a lot of really talented people from outside the CBC who didn’t fit the norm. I

think that in a lot of circles there was a *lot* of resentment and probably still is today because they didn't really understand what were doing (...) a lot of people at the CBC were not really using the Internet really to any extent – odd- that they were in this business but they didn't surf, they didn't look at stuff, they didn't know what was out there so they didn't see the value of what was going on at all and you know when Radio 3 started winning awards they really didn't get it, they thought it was some *trick*. And I think to a large extent there is a lot of that still. I've worked at the CBC 21 years, I've never worked on anything that has received so much critical acclaim around the world and received so little critical support from inside the CBC. I mean we would win an award in New York and I would write a note to my boss and they would be like, 'oh, so should we do something about that?' I mean absolutely no understanding that these were important things that the media world, outside of Canada was recognizing us for being innovative, new and different and striking. (...) It's almost as though they were embarrassed that Radio 3 won {the Prix Italia} and not their traditional core group. So inside the CBC there was this reluctance to not even support it, but just celebrate it. There was no promotion budget. Any promotion that was done, we did ourselves. We would win these awards and there wouldn't even be a press release. It was like an embarrassment to them. It's like your bastard child gets the Pulitzer prize and saying 'oh, well he's not related to me.' I don't know. It's an odd thing (Ouimet September 2004).

Pennington concedes that irrespective of a perceived corporate jealousy, poor promotions on the part of Radio 3 have also contributed to its muted profile, “there are two sides to every story. I don't think we were very good at telling people we were up for a Prix Italia so that they could watch for” (Pennington November 2005). Pennington attributes some of these tensions to Radio 3's base in Vancouver:

certainly from Alex's {Frame} point of view and from ours as a region, it made a lot more sense to be more regional. As a part of a larger company we were totally delighted to have the next newest thing from CBC Radio coming out of Vancouver because we would all have a part in developing that and have a bit of autonomy from the organization down there, the shirts and the ties and the administration. However, as we are a large company, people are stretched for resources here and there and we became a little bit on the outside. We were not only on the outside of Toronto or Montreal, we were also parked at the very end of the {CBC Vancouver} building, away from the Radio One and Radio Two people. There was very little intersection at that point (...) This was a blessing {however it also} turned out to be a little bit of a curse because with the administration

change {from Beatty, Frame, and Redekopp to Rabinovitch and the current Vice-President of CBC Radio, Jane Chalmers}, the current administration is saying, 'well, what exactly does Radio 3 provide to the larger company? (Pennington November 2004).

In 1999 the expectation had been that new media innovations experimented with on the Youth Radio network would inform production methods throughout the organization and it was also hoped that younger talent attracted to the Youth Radio network would move throughout the CBC, sharing ideas and so forth. However, one impediment to this has arguably been Radio 3's strong reliance on freelance talent. While this did contribute to the rich composition of the web magazine, it has also forced Radio 3 to develop a decidedly nebulous definition of its internal culture as talent flows in and out of the organization. This has prevented it from developing a recognizable character within the corporation.

Radio 3's emphasis on experimentation is profoundly attributable to a sense of uncertainty over its future course that has existed since 2000. As Sean Embury recognized in Spring 2003, "in the overall scheme, Radio 3 is mandated to always be moving on, always trying new things, not like Radio One where you have a radio show that is on the air for fifteen years and never changes and once it does people freak out. Radio 3 might decide next week not to do a magazine anymore (Embury April 2003). This ethos of experimentation is attributable to an awareness that CBC Radio had not ruled out satellite radio as an alternative to launching Radio 3 terrestrially, and the fact that Radio 3 had not integrated itself with the broader internal culture of the CBC.⁹ In a January 2004 interview with the Globe and Mail, Ouimet was frank about prospects for the future, "we are not a staple of the CBC family. We're new. There's a lot of questioning" (Globe and Mail January 2004). With Radio 3's inclusion within a Satellite

radio service application (tabled in 2004 and described below) there was confidence that the *cbcR3* magazine was appreciated as a *staple of Radio 3*, though even this presumption was overshadowed by a sense of overall uncertainty. Jeremy Mendes, producer at the magazine, offered the following in late October 2004,

Radio 3 is much more solid in the last two years than it's been in ten, though my feeling is that there is a push to really focus. I think that Radio 3's days of trying whatever fits *fits* and whatever goes *goes* is coming to a turning point or a point where they are starting to come together a little bit more. Basically they have come across a format that seems to work and people seem to respond to. With the earlier stuff like *120 seconds* I think what they were trying to do is get a little a little bit tighter and more interesting (...) They told us that operations will continue in Vancouver. They told us that Radio 3 as it exists right now, with all of the awards that we've won, that it is a priority, but this new radio show is also a priority, which is a very fencing-sitting position to take because you are saying that they are both priorities and if the existing radio crew is all of the sudden ramped up to produce 24 hours of radio 24/7, I don't see how they can do it without our help. They say we will not receive more money. I think if they go ahead with this radio thing that will take priority. They aren't sitting there doing calculations about what the future of the Internet is for us. There hasn't been any talk of that. It's all been about this {satellite} radio station. It doesn't make me super confident (Mendes October 2004).

At the same time, Mendes also reflected that "people {at Radio 3} are generally pretty happy, I feel very fortunate to be in the position that I'm in. I think it would be a shame for it to get dismantled after all the work that has gone into it (Mendes October 2004).¹⁰

The End of the Radio 3 Magazine

In Summer 2004, Robert Ouimet left the CBC and a new director for Radio 3, Steve Pratt, was appointed in Fall 2004. Around the same time, Ted Kennedy, assistant to the Vice-President of Radio, took the helm in overseeing CBC Radio 3's operations from Toronto. In February 2005, and after 100 issues, the *cbcR3* magazine was terminated and all but four of Radio 3's twenty-five member staff were laid off and asked to re-apply for

eighteen new positions.¹¹ Instead of allowing employees not selected by Radio 3 to “infiltrate” (Redekopp May 2004) or harness their talent within different operations at CBC Radio, these employees were made redundant. While no clear reason was given for the termination, a letter posted on the site offered, in part, the following:

Loyal fans of CBC Radio 3 (...) our mandate is to promote and showcase new and emerging Canadian music and culture, and we feel we’ve been doing it very well. We’ve been extremely innovative and it’s paid off handsomely. Our web magazine at *cbcR3.com* has won numerous international awards, as has our radio programming (...) Here’s the thing – we want to get better. So we’ve decided to reinvent ourselves again. Our goal is to become the definitive voice of independent music and culture at the CBC. So far, we’ve been CBC’s best kept secret and we think it’s time we let more people know about all the great things we’re doing (...) Change is scary, but it’s good. We’re looking forward to creating a new, innovative Radio 3 and we hope you’re looking forward to experiencing it (CBC Radio 3 2005).

The letter espoused Radio 3’s aim produce more radio content that could be shared across CBC Radio. The letter also emphasized Radio 3’s hopes that a proposed satellite radio application between the CBC and Sirius Canada would go through, emphasizing that contingent to this, Radio 3 would be focusing even more of its efforts on producing 24 hour radio content.¹² For her part, Vice-President of Radio, Jane Chalmers offered a pragmatic assessment of Radio 3’s success: “their work is outstanding and they’ve done a great job. But if you walk down the street in Vancouver or Toronto, unfortunately most people don’t know what it is. We need to increase the brand recognition” (Globe and Mail March 2005). In an interview with the Globe and Mail, Ouimet noting that in five years the CBC had spent only \$100,000 in promoting Radio 3, decried the move:

now you have this whole community of freelancers who were making really interesting art and stories and editorial positions on everything from

Kyoto to new music and they will be gone They'll be picked up by new media companies and ad agencies and the whole vision will be lost (...) The private sector is totally into this stuff {new media development} now and it makes me sad that the CBC doesn't realize the gem they've created" (Globe and Mail March 2005).¹³

In terminating the magazine and laying-off its employees, Radio 3 dealt a blow to its internal culture and not insignificantly, its fan base. Assumptions within the organization under Ouimet had been such that experimentation was privileged with respect to new media and that this experiment would be allowed to continue given Radio 3's founding circumstances. It was the new media team in Vancouver who had lobbied Rabinovitch and CBC Radio management to adapt the Youth Radio plan for a new platform. In doing so, it elaborated upon the former's narrow demographic target and vigorously supported and raised profiles of Canadian talent through services such as the magazine and *newmusiccanada*. And yet a better resourced and more collaborative internal culture comprised of permanent employees might have been able to harness its organizational energies into both production and promotion, thereby avoiding Chalmers' charge that the web magazine had failed because its *creative team* failed to raise its profile. As Lawrence reflected in 2004, "it is a shame we don't advertise more (...) but we choose to put our resources elsewhere, like salaries" (Lawrence November 2004). With its inclusion in the CBC/Sirius venture, Radio 3 would be assured financial support for its promotions, though the more fundamental costs of such a strategy would invite questions not just over the viability of Radio 3, but the possibility that the CBC had undermined its own public remit.

On Satellite

“Any new service I have seen starts off in an experimental way but very quickly realizes it’s got to be successful and define how it’s going to measure success and then it becomes a different service”

– Harold Redekopp (Redekopp May 2004).

“We’ve had a confusing brand message. We’re funded by radio; we’re a radio department entity. Our primary identity is on the web, so we’re called ‘Radio 3 on the web’ or ‘Radio3.com.’ We’ve got four other websites that are a part of what we do. I don’t think many people know that those are a part of Radio 3. We also do programming, ‘Radio 3 on Radio Two.’ Satellite is going to be the first chance to really define ourselves and have something that people can latch onto 24/7. Something like that will be understood by a broad audience and is going to do a lot more for public awareness”

– Steve Pratt (Pratt November 2004).

In December 2003, CBC/Radio-Canada, Sirius Satellite Radio Inc. and Standard Broadcasting (the largest privately owned broadcast radio company in Canada) announced a joint venture, CBC/Sirius Satellite Radio, or Sirius Canada (based in Toronto) to pursue an application to the CRTC for subscription satellite digital audio distribution in Canada.¹⁴ The CBC’s investment in the partnership is just under \$15 million. In October 2004, the application was tabled before the CRTC. The service would have an initial offering of 61 U.S. based music channels and 13 non-music channels. The CBC’s contribution would include its existing French and English information radio channels, and two new services. As the application outlined, the two channels would be “dedicated to a variety of new music, emerging talent and youth-oriented programming. Based partly on the CBC’s Internet services, CBC Radio Three and Bandeàpart, but also drawing on the other two key CBC radio services, Radio Two and La Chaine Culturelle: (Sirius Canada 2003: 20). The CBC premised their application around Satellite radio’s facility to offer near total coverage across Canada, thereby achieving the terms set out by the Broadcast Act requiring CBC programming be made ‘available throughout Canada by

the most appropriate and efficient means” (Sirius Canada 2003: 17). There would be no local content and aside from the CBC, the BBC is the only international {public} broadcaster included in the service.

The Sirius Canada venture would provide Radio 3 with a larger platform for the music stored already by *newmusiccanada* and *justconcerts*. As Chalmers told the CRTC in October 2004, “last year Radio 3 produced 70 concerts across Canada that we used on the website and Radio One and Two. So they are producing a massive amount of material” (CRTC 2004). In addition to paying artists for live, North America wide concerts aired on Sirius, Sirius Canada would be committing approximately 5% of revenues to Canadian talent development organizations such as Music Action, Indie Pool and Factor, liaison groups between artists and music industries.¹⁵ The CBC projected that this contribution would amount to \$21.5 million dollars over CBC Sirius’ seven year license term.¹⁶ University of Ottawa law professor Michael Geist remarked to the New York Times, “what we’re going to see is increasingly a shift to policy that encourages the creation of Canadian content, as opposed to policies focused on creating barriers to disseminating foreign content in Canada” (New York Times 2004).

The opposite was argued by with the public broadcasting advocacy groups, Our Public Airwaves (OPA) and Friends of Canadian Broadcasting. Each expressed concern that the inclusion of a few Canadian channels only window-dressed a predominately American service and that this would in fact diminish national interest in Canadian production. The leitmotifs running through each of the interventions involved core issues to do with protection of Canadian content rules and foreign control. In its letter to the CRTC, Arthur Lewis of OPA enumerated the implications of what he has termed a

questionable partnership between the nation's public broadcaster and a consortium of for-profit parties:

the current demand for satellite radio may be insufficient to sustain the substantial costs involved in offering an all-Canadian service, but neither this nor the lack of suitable Canadian satellites or allocated frequency are sufficient justification for licensing American services. Any benefit that flows from having satellite subscription available is far outweighed by the potential damage to Canadian cultural sovereignty, to Canadian broadcasters through loss of audience and critically, to the Canadian performers, composers, musicians and other artists whose access to the proposed satellite-based services would be minimal (...) while satellite-based service would undoubtedly provide improved coverage to rural and northern areas of the country, this would come at much too high a price if it can be achieved only through importation of massive amounts of American programming (Our Public Airwaves 2004).

CBC Radio management, however, exalted the benefits of the venture, as CBC/Sirius would be able to absorb a number of financial costs associated with Radio 3's marketing. Citing the roughly 40% in cuts made to the CBC's overall budget since the late eighties and early nineties, Ted Kennedy rationalizes the partnership's benefits as such:

with Satellite radio there is marketing done on your behalf done by the Satellite radio company who are trying to attract subscribers and then inside of it you are included in a tier of services with similar appeal so we will get added to that tier of contemporary music services and we will get a program description there. There's not a lot of marketing we can do that will affect the acceptability of Radio 3 as a Satellite service. Once you make all of the subscribers aware that you are there, there's no financial incentive for us to get a greater portion of subscribers and Sirius is responsible for attracting people overall to the service so we get very lucky here. If this was a regular radio service you would have to do marketing (...) We would prefer at this stage {because of the CBC's financial realities} to put the money into programming. Right now at the CBC, every dollar that goes into administration or management doesn't go into programming (...) With challenges as they are right now, we want every penny that we have to show us on the air (...) We're looking to maintain the character of the websites we have now but make it more targeted. Right now it's all over the place. We want to make it one unique brand that can stand for something (Kennedy November 2004).¹⁷

In specific response to OPA's call for the launch wholly Canadian owned and operated Satellite service, Kennedy and Pratt point out that even the most optimistic figures for its subscriber base could not justify such a costly venture. As Kennedy maintains, "I used to work for the only other Canadian company who might conceivably afford this. They took one look at this and said it was 100% more than they could afford. The radio market just cannot support it" (Kennedy November 2004).

Another criticism of the venture targets the cost of the service to individual subscribers. Reception requires the purchase of a satellite receiver, the price of which can run anywhere from \$70 for a small portable model to upwards of \$500 for larger stereo units or an appreciably higher price for a new car fitted with Sirius Satellite reception while the monthly subscription rate is, as of December 2005, \$14.99 a month. Lucrative as it is for Sirius and its partners in the manufacturing industries, subscription satellite radio necessarily excludes certain audiences. "I don't own a digital radio" said Mendes in 2004, "and in a year from now if I have to go out and buy a \$200 receiver and pay \$12 a month for it, well I'm not so sure that I'm going to do that. Right off the bat you start to marginalize your audience. Only people with new Volkswagens can listen to Radio 3? What is that, 3% of the population?" (Mendes October 2004) Mendes is not alone among producers and listeners of Radio 3 on Radio Two who have questioned whether Radio 3's promotion onto satellite will mean that its broadcast radio programming will, eventually, move entirely off of Radio Two and onto satellite, and to a lesser extent, podcasting.¹⁸ According to Lawrence "we will have to consider if we are doing programming, seven days a week, 24 hours a day on satellite, is property, real estate on Radio Two still valuable to us? The CBC cares about Radio Two, sometimes it seems that they don't but

they do. In my gut feeling that if the Sirius thing goes through there will be a transitional period where we will be on satellite, we will be on Radio Two but then eventually we will be on just satellite” (Lawrence November 20004).

Of the English radio services the CBC is contributing to Sirius, the appeal of total, 24 hour coverage across North America is appreciably more rewarding for Radio 3 than it is for Radio One, which already has significant coverage across Canada and which already broadcasts throughout the day and week. As already stated, while Radio One and Radio Two are available across the country in real-time, terrestrial coverage of Radio Two remains limited to larger urban centres. Thus, from its launch in 2000, Radio 3 has been marginalized both in terms of its placement within late evening schedules and its placement on Radio Two. On Satellite, Radio 3 is expected to program an additional 168 hours a week (Kennedy November 2004). In speaking of the considerable effect this would have on the productive capacity of Radio 3, Kennedy stated in November 2004:

I don't think Radio 3 exists right now. You're talking about like it exists and to our mind because it was envisioned as a broadcast service it's never existed. What has happens on the web is a placeholder until we could get the broadcast legs back underneath it. The broadcast legs were cut underneath it when the last cuts went through and all of the sudden we had a budget for transmitters to get us on the air in Canada and, it got cut away. So there was a decision, either we were going to abandon everything totally...the previous management administration was not willing to abandon it totally so they used it as a web outlet as kind of a place holder until we could get another strategy which as opportunity has presented itself with Satellite radio we're going to take it. That's why when you talk about Radio Three, I take it as though it doesn't exist right now and it's all brand new (Kennedy November 2004).

Admittedly, to characterize Radio 3 on the web as merely a *placeholder* reveals some disregard for the conceptual and technical work Ouimet and others invested into Radio 3 since its 2000 launch. Radio 3 on satellite could not exist with leveraging content from

sites such as *justconcerts* and *newmusiccanada* – sites that would not have existed had the Vancouver new media team not convinced CBC management to allocate funding for new media experimentation.

In June 2005, the CRTC unanimously approved applications by both Sirius and its competitor, Canadian Satellite Radio (a partnership between a Toronto entrepreneur and Washington-based XM Satellite Radio Holdings Inc.). At this time, appeals were put forward by a number of groups representing Quebec musicians expressing dissatisfaction that only 10% of Sirius and Canadian Satellite's combined channel output would be Canadian, and only 2.5% would be francophone. The CRTC did not rescind its decision, however the CBC did agree to add two more channels: Radio Canada International Plus and a new French-language service, InfoPlus.¹⁹

In late Fall 2005, Radio 3 (with input from Toronto-based CBC/Sirius program directors) launched a new portal site, amalgamating *justconcerts*, *newmusiccanada*, *rootsmusiccanada* and the magazine archives. The site also includes a link to its weekly podcast, an interactive music player allowing users to customize their own playlist and, most prominently, a blog detailing a miscellany of content, including brief information about upcoming programs and incidental posts by Radio 3 personalities and producers.²⁰ In December, Radio 3 launched on Satellite. Carrying 85% Canadian content, programming includes 80% music as well as two to three minute pop culture stories filed by reporters and freelancers in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and points in between²¹ "There aren't many models for the kind of radio station we're developing" Pratt told the *Globe and Mail* in November 2005, "it's a bit of a weird hybrid and to a certain extent we have to figure it out as we go along" (*Globe and Mail* November 2005).²²

Conclusion

CBC Radio 3: Expansion and Experimentation in Context

The situation for CBC Radio in the late 1990s was such that, in the opinion of its senior management, it risked alienating a generation of listeners, one whose media preferences proliferated in space to the emergence of new technologies of audio distribution and usage. The need for the CBC to build this audience was therefore considered essential to its future visibility in an era of global media flows. Radio, a medium described by Susan Douglas as betraying an exceptional “technical insurgency” (Hendy 2000b: 113), survives through how its forms are adapted by and for its listening communities. This idea was understood by Frame’s cohort of CBC producers throughout the 1960s, as radio reconstituted itself for the television age.²³ When Frame told the CRTC in 1999 that “literally a re-invention of the medium” (Frame 2 June 1999) was taking place, it was with the conviction that CBC Radio’s failure to respond would diminish its communicative effectiveness to the next generation of public service advocates.²⁴

Through its ‘funnel’ model of content production, the Radio 3 magazine’s showcase of work by visual artists alongside corresponding audio and/or written commentaries entreated new conceptions of ‘genre’ and ‘format’. The magazine’s coalesce with Radio 3’s other properties, significantly *justconcerts* and *newmusiccanada* suggested a new editorial medium, one in which the line between audience and creator increasingly blurred.²⁵ This amalgam of innovations represented an entrepreneurial approach to traditional broadcasting practice keyed to its mandate (however tenuously defined) to reach new audiences by exploiting the technical capacities of the digital age. In his essay exploring the political economy of new technologies and models of

sound broadcasting in relation to conventional {public}radio practices, Wall (2004) maintains that the

Internet {or non over-the-air radio} is significant because its technology allows for, and even encourages, very different forms of institutionalization, broadcast practice and listening cultures. At first sight they seem to offer an opportunity for a recast idea of public service, or new forms of participatory broadcasting. Equally they offer a very different field of political economy for new entrants and experimentation. However, such utopian ideals of a new radio ecology need to be tempered by a new set of imperatives which will drive this new media form, just as an earlier set drove our existing radio system (Wall 2004: 33).

Wall's comment on the imperatives driving innovations to broadcasting routines motivates critical questions about the integrity of Radio 3's current service model. While its online properties such as *newmusiccanada* and *justconcerts* and its weekend radio programming on Radio Two remain intact alongside the addition of its podcasting service, the hub of Radio 3 has decidedly shifted from the magazine to twenty-four hour, subscription satellite radio. Rather than signalling the clarion call of radio's re-invention, Radio 3's current model is rather more indicative of the CBC's willingness to confer legitimacy on market-based solutions to its funding shortfalls.²⁶ Within the portfolio of a billion dollar media enterprise, Radio 3 programming will be assessed according to criteria which is ineluctably tied to the commercial goals of Sirius Inc.

The question of why CBC Radio, following the jettisoning of the Youth Radio application, did not consider the initiative as a twenty-four Internet radio station is perhaps less attributable to the fact that senior management simply did not – as Ouimet has maintained – *get* the Internet, than it is to economics. Given the choice between investing in a new radio form and investing in a commercial revenue model, the latter policy inarguably held much more business sense. The CBC is able to offload investment

in what will now be the bulk of Radio 3 programming (and promotions) to Sirius Canada. Indeed, the CBC is no more supportive of Radio 3 now than it was under the helm of Ouimet – a fact most clearly suggested by the termination of the web magazine, a service deemed superfluous to its commercial tract.

That the CBC has pursued private/public business ventures is not in and of itself disagreeable. In an era of converged and disaggregated media ecologies, public broadcasters must be amenable to new ways of distributing content. In some cases, the technologies of delivery - such as satellite communications- will be privately held. However, there is a heightened social responsibility for the public broadcaster to ensure that its remit to discharge universal, national access to core services is not undermined. While Radio One is universally available over-the-air and online in addition to being on satellite, Radio 3 is not. It follows that there should exist a willingness among CBC Radio management to absorb Radio 3's subscription costs in order to insure that it does not evolve as a two-tiered, niche service available to a privileged cognoscenti of users. If it cannot do so, then the CBC must reevaluate its justifications for including it within Sirius Canada operations. Furthermore, in the interests of optimizing service – as its satellite proponents suggest it will do by virtue of its North America wide delivery – Radio 3 should not rule out resurrecting its web magazine. The magazine, limited as it arguably was content wise ²⁷, was the portal to an online presence that attempted at a new kind of public sphere for a new kind of audience to the CBC - a not insignificant fact given the service's founding purpose.

Notes

¹ In policy-related literature from this period, Radio 3 is, for the most part, termed Radio Three. The numbering, as it were, occurred after the Youth Radio application was shelved and Radio 3's new media presence emerged.

² The English Radio Development Project of 1983 had also affirmed the importance of thoughtful scheduling:

scheduling is critical to our success. We must not lurch from one type of programming to another and expect to find success (although audiences can be led from one *program* to another (...)) Weekend programming that leaps from 18th Century classical music to religious programming to experimental music will not succeed in building audiences" (ERDP 1983: 56).

³ Another outstanding issue that interfered with the CBC's proposal to add a new terrestrial service was the fact that after almost three decades, Radio Two coverage was not yet complete across Canada. However, in 1999, the CBC did commit to applying for additional transmitters over the course of the proceeding seven years. The expectation that Radio Two be available to at least 50 percent (and eventually 75 percent) of the population of each province was a significant matter for the CRTC. At the time, Beatty assured the CRTC that (CRTC June 9 1999) universal coverage across Canada was still a key aim of the CBC's existing radio services.

⁴ In 1989, the Mulroney government cut \$140 million in CBC funding over five years. In turn the Chrétien government cut federal funding by \$400 million over the course of 1994-95 and 1997-98 (Hill Times 1999). Harold Redekopp has remarked that these cuts resulted in a "serious" (Redekopp May 2004) problem for the service's news and information division.

⁵ This weekly Saturday late evening program featured musical selections compiled by guest hosts, many of who had no previous radio experience.

⁶ According to a producer at Radio 3 this inclusion seems to have been made in order to symbolically provide a degree of credibility or recognizable identity to Radio 3 during its beginning years. However, according to the same producer, from 2002 on, staff at Brave New Waves have resisted being lumped in with Radio 3's disparate activities.

⁷ In 2003, Myra Draisin, executive director of the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, the organization that hosts the Webby's, enthused, "it's just a seamless site. I think it demonstrates the next generation of broadband. Awesome from a content perspective, awesome from a visual design perspective, from an interactivity perspective; they're just doing it right" (Toronto Star August 2003).

⁸ In Summer 2002, *120seconds* launched its first and only film festival at the (former) Blinding Light cinema in Vancouver.

⁹ Radio 3's involvements with digital radio had been hinted at well before it was included in the Sirius Satellite application. In 2003, just prior to the November launch of the Radio 3 magazine, executive producer Rob McLaughlin reflected on Radio 3's existing and future operations, "Radio 3 is tied to numerous content properties, but at the same time Radio 3 is also looked to as a place where content can be developed using new technologies, and (a place for) developing new technologies to figure out what things like DAB and broadband and converged content means for the public broadcaster" (Broadcast Dialogue 2002).

¹⁰ Mendes left the CBC permanently in late Spring 2005.

¹¹ Archives of the magazine remain online at <http://www.cbcR3.com>.

¹² This was echoed in a separate letter issued by Jane Chalmers in reaction to rumours that *Brave New Waves* was also being taken off air. Chalmers' assured that "CBC Radio is not altering its responsibility for promoting and showcasing new and up-and-coming Canadian talent (...) we are exploring opportunities to augment our commitment to independent artists on existing platforms and we are constantly looking at alternative strategies to expand our promotion of Canadian musicians. Until such a time, *Brave New Waves* will continue" (Chalmers 2005). As of late 2005 however, *Brave New Waves* was symbolically released from its affiliation with Radio 3 and returned solely as an entity of Radio Two.

¹³ An editorial Vancouver's *Only* magazine, an alternative weekly, also lamented:

Awards were won, barriers stretched, Canadian underground/oddball discoveries unfurled in pixilated, image-rich glory to the world. The folks at the Ceeb feel they can do better. Or at least do sideways (...) The likely cost in Canada for CBC Radio 3 will be around \$15, and you will need a credit card to join. The real issue is the slippery slope of suddenly having to pay for what Canadians have traditionally enjoyed for bupkiss. Are we spoiled? Maybe, but there is precious little beauty left in life still free. Soon, however gorgeous, there may be less (*Only* magazine March 2005).

¹⁴ Sirius Canada is 40% owned by the CBC, 40% by Standard Broadcasting, and 20% by the U.S. owned Sirius Satellite Radio Inc. Its non-Canadian channels include CNBC, ESPN Radio, ABC News, BBC World Service, E! Entertainment, NPR, Radio Disney and Jimmy Buffet's Radio Margaritaville. Its industry partners include major auto manufacturers such as Ford, BMW, Audi, Porsche and electronics manufacturers and retailers such as Sanyo, Panasonic, Best Buy, Target, Wal-Mart and RadioShack. Sirius Inc. has a market value of approximately \$8 billion U.S. (Globe and Mail June 2005).

¹⁵ Gregg Terrence, president of Indie Pool, which liaisons between approximately 20,000 independent musicians, lauded the plan and suggested that the "more sustainable options there are for airplay, the better it is for airplay, the better it is for artists (...) the fun of discovering artists and breaking bands and taking chances left terrestrial radio 10 years ago" (New York Times 2004).

¹⁶ The application acknowledged that at such a time that subscription revenue increased, copyright fees to artists and contributions to talent development would also increase.

¹⁷ In October 2004, Radio 3 magazine producer, Jeremy Mendes, offered scepticism about Sirius Inc.'s ability to promote and brand Radio 3 across North America, "how are people in Dallas going to know about us if people in Halifax don't, are they going to put an ad in the local paper? (Mendes October 2004).

¹⁸ In Spring 2005, Radio 3 launched a weekly, one-hour podcast. It quickly became the most listened to Canadian podcast available through itunes, Apple Computer's extensive directory of podcasts and MP3s. It has received some one million downloads as of January 2006 (CBC Radio 3 2005).

¹⁹ This added up to six CBC services available on Sirius Satellite (CBC Radio One, Radio 3, RCI Plus, Radio-Canada's Première Plus and Bandeàpart – Radio 3's French equivalent, and InfoPlus.

²⁰ According to producers at Radio 3, the look of this portal will evolve as Radio 3 develops a new web identity in tandem to the strengthening of its satellite programming.

²¹ On-air personalities will include Grant Lawrence and a number of other independent musicians. As Steve Pratt enthuses, "they're all giant fans of Canadian independent music, and a lot of them are musicians themselves, so they bring a lot of unique knowledge and experience to the table – and they have a lot of great stories to share with audiences," says Steve Pratt, director of Radio 3. "They're also real people. They're not clichéd, deep-voiced guys named Flip or Buzz. They have a genuine passion that they want to share" (iloveradio.org 2005).

²² In developing the 20% of non-music content which will appear on Radio 3's satellite programming, management has maintained that pop culture features and music scene reports will likely not exceed several minutes in length since it is assumed that younger listeners do not want to listen to long-form documentary or reportage (Pratt March 2005). As Pratt suggested in 2004, "it won't be anything long. It will be 'let's pick an issue and do five minutes on it then two hours later let's pick another issue and do five minutes on it'" (Pratt November 2004). As a counter-point to this, Berland maintains in 'Radio Space and Industrial Time: The Case of Music Formats' (1993) that "the assumption that more or less continuous music is the ideal program content for radio rests on the equally convenient assumption that radio listeners are mainly not listening very closely" (Berland 1993: 230).

²³ See Carter (1991) for an in-depth description of the CBC 'radio revolution' of the 1960s and early seventies. Included within is an examination of how scheduling practices and program formats were innovated in order to reflect new ways of listening to radio and the changing social role of the national public broadcaster – in particular its practice of the 'new journalism' which emerged from the revolutionary climate of 1960s North America.

²⁴ In 2004, Patrick Watson, former President of the CBC and acclaimed producer and host of CBC documentary and information programming expressed concern that a preoccupation with young listeners and popular culture is undermining the civic-

mindedness of CBC Radio. Watson entreats the CBC to treat its audiences as citizens, not as a sought after 18 to 34 year-old demographic. While it might be argued that Watson's comments are directed at CBC Radio One in particular, they could just as well comprise normative expectations for Radio 3. As with Radio One, Radio 3's contribution to civic communication is keyed to its programming priorities and production values. Indeed, in an era where commercial-free media in the form of podcasts and digital radio are ubiquitously available, the distinctiveness of public radio channels alongside constellations of privately held satellite channels will only come from the integrity of the institutions in which they are entrenched and reflective of.

²⁵ It is not insignificant that Radio 3 maintained its over-the-air radio presence while it evolved on the Internet. Rather than consider this a failure in overcoming the 'scheduling tensions' which had partly instigated a call for a Youth Radio Network, the presence of Radio 3 on Radio Two should be affirmed for its connection to broadcasting practices which have sought to *curate* experimental or challenging music for the purpose of concentrated, late night listening. The removal of Brave New Waves from its current late evening time slot would, in this sense, be an affront to the 'somnambulant dutifulness' of its legion of loyal fans. Admittedly, this aspect of the cultural value of traditional radio scheduling is assumed to be anachronistic at a time when content on-demand is increasingly the rule that guides contemporary media delivery.

²⁶ In her essay, 'Public Service Is Not Dead Yet: Strategies in the 21st Century' (2003), Steemers maintains that while commercialism and private/public partnerships are not irreconcilable with public broadcasting values

it is crucial to observe that public broadcasters wanting to keep (or tap) additional commercial funding, or who wish to alter programming services to maintain audience share, need to clearly show this accords with their public service remit and continued public funding (...) failing to demonstrate both uniqueness and appeal across a broad range of output, the consensus for public broadcasting could conceivably dissolve (Steemers 2003: 128, 133).

The CBC lockout of late Summer 2005 (Globe and Mail October 2005) suggested that not even its current senior management could be looked to as stewards of public broadcasting. In such a climate, the pursuit of projects that undermine its core values is ever more perilous.

²⁷ Not a few of its former producers and fans have conceded that in spite of the magazine's polished look, its flash photography and built-in soundcasting effects often threatened to overwhelm its written content. In the opinion of one former producer who is also a journalist, compared to Canadian print publications such as *The Walrus*, *Geist* or even the national newspapers, the written features on the web magazine were negligible.

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