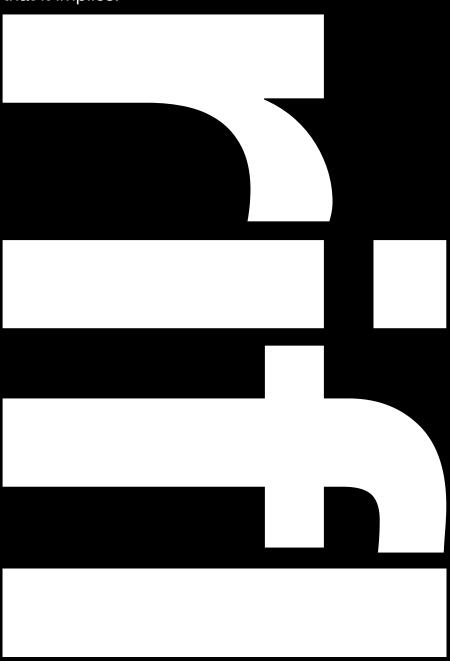
#### Winter/Spring 2018

Program guide for WRFL and a forum for exploration of topics pertaining to music and all which that it implies.

Radio Free Lexington. Your only alternative left.



Radio Free Lexington, 1/3 2018



# Contents

This book is a Program guide for WRFL and a forum for exploration of topics pertaining to music and all which that it implies.

WRFL is the student-run radio station of the University of Kentucky. It hosts both student and community DJs, onair 24/7 since 1988.

Listen: 88.1FM / wrfl.fm



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#### Letter From the General Manager

by Maya Collins Patterson

#### Hello Lexington!

I hope everyone has had a wonderful start to their 2018. It may be cold outside but the radio is always warm. I'm so excited about our Spring 2018 show schedule. We have some old favorites and some exciting new shows including Vagenda of Manocide, L.A.R.P., The Gay Show and so many more. Make sure you tune in!!

Another thing that is happening this spring--WRFL is turning 30!! We're so excited to welcome our current deejays and alumni as well as you, the public, to our celebration March 2-4th!! I can't thank Ben Allen and Susannah Stitzer, along with a slew of other kids, enough for everything they've done for this birthday show and everything else they do. Lexington wouldn't be the same without the hard work and dedication of these people. I wish everyone of them could write a letter to you!

As we embark on the journey to 30 years of non-commercial, 24/7, late-night, early-morning, safe-harbor, student and community radio I want to ask a question. What does WRFL mean to you? Whether you are a UK student fresh off your parents' couch, or a dedicated listener who remembers the first song that was broadcasted, do you remember what it was? I want to hear your story and your WRFL experience! Send your experience to contact@ wrfl.fm. What have these last 30 years meant to you?

We continue to run this station because of our love for the underdog. The music that no one has heard of or the music no one else will play. We also do it for the love of Lexington and our thriving music scene (if you've ever checked out the events page on our website you know, also a shameless plug for our website wrfl.fm). But we above all else do it for you, the listener. The one who is listening and has since the beginning of time (yes time only started 30 years ago). I call this B.R. (before radio free lexington). I love you, we all love you. Thank you. Here's to 30 more!! cheers.

#### **Letter From the Editor**

#### by Ethan Fedele

I was able to explore design choices with wrfl that I couldn't have anywhere else. I've decided to make probably strange decisions in this magazine/zine/guide becuase I was given the freedom to explore what made sense to me and what felt intuitive. It also sparked my interest in music as a whole which sounds ridiculous but I really had no clue what I liked until being exposed to so much of it.

I hope it can be that for you as well. Let wrfl spark your interest in music and let it offer branches into niche and the unfamiliar that challenge your comfort zone and your understanding of sound.

- 1 Maya Collins/Patterson. General Manager
- 2 Anna Von Schmeling. (outgoing) Promotions Director
- 3 Indrani Fiona. Volunteering Director
- 4 Franki Arroyo. Programming Director
- 5 Cameron Childress. Local Music Director
- 6 Emma Friedman-Buchanan. Library Director
- 7 Phil Kisling. Promotions Director
- 8 Grant Sparks. Website Director
- 9 Ben Allen. Media Advisor
- 10 Destiny Carter. Assistant Programming Director
- 11 Ethan Fedele. **Design Director**
- 12 Ashleigh Barks. Video Director
- 13 Chris Browning. (outgoing) Music Director
- 14 Brenna Greenwell. Training Director
- 15 Michael Ayers. News Director
- **16** Avery Rondinelli. **Music Director**
- **17** Anna Stamm. **Development Director**
- 18 Clay Greene. Assistant Production Director
- 19 Tre Lyerly. Assistant Promotions Director
- 20 Max Smith. Production Director



## 2017 Staff Picks

## Alex Miller. Perfume Genius, "No Shape"

This album is characterized by its textures. From Mike Hadreas' thin, fragile croons to the massive, otherworldly, twinkling instrumentation the sweeps over much of the album, it is clear that Perfume Genius has become a master of manipulating these contrasting textures into stories-stories capable of reflecting nearly every emotion, from the subtle smoothness of tracks like "Die 4 You" and "Run Me Through", to the stunning and delicate sweetness of "Valley" and "Alan", to tracks like "Wreath" that soar with unbridled passion and vigor. Remarkable about this album is its ability to transcend the sonic experience and instead create a complete sensory experience—a trait which many songwriters attempt but perhaps none has quite mastered to the degree which Perfume Genius has.

#### World Bill. Trio da Kali & Kronos Quartet, "Ladilikan"

This release featured three Malian musicians with traditional instruments and vocals playing with the innovative string quartet, Kronos Quartet. The album is an amazing collection of songs with the music flowing back and forth between the Malian musicians and Kronos string arrangements.

A sublime album.

## Jim. Tyler Childers, "Purgatory"

The first album produced by Sturgill Simpson besides his own. It was WRFL's most-played album during its time in rotation last summer.

#### Allison Pin Mr. Jukes, "God First"

Mr. Jukes is actually a project led by the frontman of Bombay Bicycle Club (I just found this out!). This album was released mid-July, and is one of my favorite albums that was released this year. It combines many genres, such as pop, funk, hip hop, and soul. It features several acclaimed vocalists, such as Charles Bradley, De La Soul, Lalah Hathaway, and more. Each song is unique in their own way, but as a whole album, they combine into a wonderful compilation of music. I believe this is Mr. Jukes's first LP, and I can safely say I was blown away. I think anyone would be able to enjoy this album.

#### Kamasi Washington, "Harmony of Difference"

Released around the end of September of this year, saxophonist Kamasi Washington released this wonderful EP. This album takes contemporary jazz to a whole new level. Each song is crafted beautifully, and probably my most favorite aspect of this album is that he takes melodies and motifs from each of these songs and combines them into the final song featured on this EP. If you are willing to sit down and listen to it in its entirety, I definitely recommend this EP. Instrumental music lovers will appreciate this EP a lot.

## Cameron Childress. Goldlink, "At What Cost"

An ode to D.C. and go go music, this album is as danceable as it is introspective, as Goldlink delves into the influence that his surroundings have had on his music. Sonically this is my favorite hip hop album of the year.

## Emma Friedman-Buchanan. Arto Lindsay, "Cuidado Madame"

...it continues with his brilliant blend of electronic/angular sounds and MPB (música popular brasileira). The glimmers of his work from the New York No Wave scene and his later New Wave and jazz projects all create richly textural music complemented by his dreamy voice. It's also incredibly fun to dance to

## Grant Sparks. Washed Out, "Mister Mellow"

In addition to being an excellent overview of his work, style, and genre, it's a spectacular album packed with deep beats.

Also, the "music video" for this album is all 35 minutes.

#### Anna Von Schmeling. Lorde, "Melodrama"

...the album is beautifully crafted and one of the only albums I listened to this year that I enjoyed listening all the way through from the first song to the last.

## Phil Kisling. Ayreon, "The Source"

This somehow completely flew under my radar but it is a master-piece of prog metal and opera metal. Everyone should listen to this massive 2 disc LP that has like 17 singers on it. It's

#### Avery Rondinelli. Vince Staples, "Big Fish Theory"

The most mature, tough as nails, no BS rapper in hip hop today, Vince's sophomore album combines dark, aquatic themes with glitchy electronic production that pair perfectly with his rap style. I've never heard more thought provoking bangers in my life

## Ashleigh Barks. Royal Blood "How Did We Get So Dark"

There's a lot of really catchy guitar riffs and drum beats, and it's impressive that a rock duo can make that big of a sound. Plus, the music videos for the album are cool and kinda bizarre. RIYL Muse, Foo Fighters, or Queens of the Stone Age

#### Ethan Fedele. Golden Teacher, "No Luscious Life"

Glasgow weird disco, house, experimental dance group Golden Teacher came into my consciousness from browsing through Boomkat's new releases (I like Boomkat). It's texturally bouncy and raw, with its syncopated rhythms and a catchy mixture of synthetic and acoustic sounds. This album has provided me with the best dance music of the year.

#### Clay Greene. Lake Street Dive, "Side Pony"

It's an album that I've kept coming back to all year

#### Ben Allen.

#### Matias Aguayo and The Desdemonas, "Sofarnopolis"

TFrom Kompact recording artist Matias Aguayo, you have dark post-punky/barry adamson-ish creepy Chome-style future beats.

#### Duds, "Of A Nature or Degree"

These guys are angular AS HELL, economic, Minutemen length and INTENSE.

#### Sacred Paws, "Strike a Match"

Awesome, in the Raincoats/Slits/Maximum Joy vein upbeat jammers.

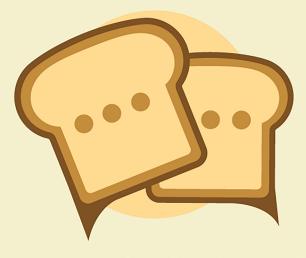
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(DS The first time I walked INTO The STATION (WITH LANA!) & SOW OIL The STICKERS & POSTERS & RECORDS & CDS, WAS INT ON OVERWHELMING feeling of "Thespire" SPE MY PROPLE", THAT, I have SINCL learned, TO REUGNIZED 25 2 SIGNAL OF 2 TURNING POINT IN MY LITE ... having Mich scream at me After i played per set a Public Eveny rune that had the Flward it it. This was wisit's back in '89 or 190. Johnson the m EMPTYING THE GIANT ASHTRAY ON THE CONTROL DESK INTO THE GARBAGE CAN LTHAT WAS JAM PACKED W/ ARBY'S AND SHAM! AND HAVING IT CATCHFIRE FROM AN UNEXTINGUISHED BUTT. \* I BELIEVE THIS HAPPENED TO A FEW PEOPLE See, this dovetails with one of my favorite, memories someone came to visit me during my shift & left before it was over. When I left, the dumpster in the alley was completely engulfed in flames. The police & five departments were both Here. To this day, this anonymous no former DJ would probably deny it, but I know they did it. It tickles me to end! always seemed to NUSTMISS Once assisted the dumpster fires. Grosh If as he did Darn my luck! att Boomslang People in the office

I remember... the night that two had walked into the station and want into the practice studio Their mirrored the on-air studio and unplugged the turntables and walked out with them right in front of everyone. I think after that, we got the FOOTAGE IN WURE FOODAGE IN MY XINNEV PARENTS' VHS COLLECTION, DIGITI-SORNI ZING IT, AND EDITING IT DOWN TO SHARE Ty brought a chain sawl in, tired it up, and cut a Ratt record in half on the air. There was a significant amount of changer exhoust throughout the Station. The GM @ the time made him leave. HIMK YOU MEAN THE TIME TY FIRED UP A CHAINSAW IN THE ON AIR STUDIO TO CUT AN Album IN HALF, NOT REALIZING THIS KIND OF THING WAS TRADITIONALLLY HANDLED BY SOUND REFECTS THE BEST = EXPLANATION et the diff beetween acceptable of the Unacceptable 14115. you can be pissed off, but not pissed on

Copy the following sequence & play it in spell-check or whatever equivalence is out there.

-a rhythm for publication by David Farris



## PHILOSOPHY Bakes Bread

Food for thought about life & leadership.

In our first 10 months since our launch with WRFL in January of 2017, we've had 25,000 downloads from 95 countries! Thanks for listening! And tell your friends!

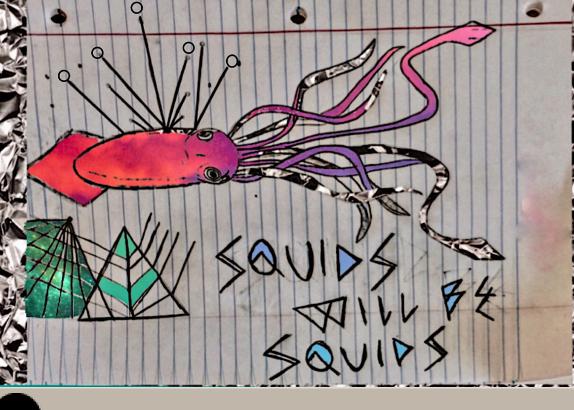
Co-hosted by Dr. Eric Thomas Weber & Dr. Anthony Cashio

Listen to the show, subscribe on iTunes, Google Play, or RSS, & rate and review us so more people hear about the show!

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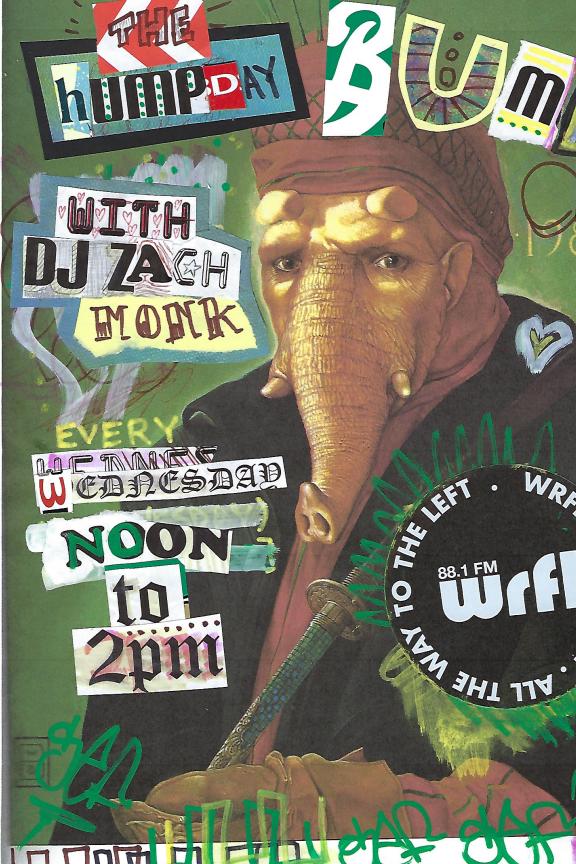


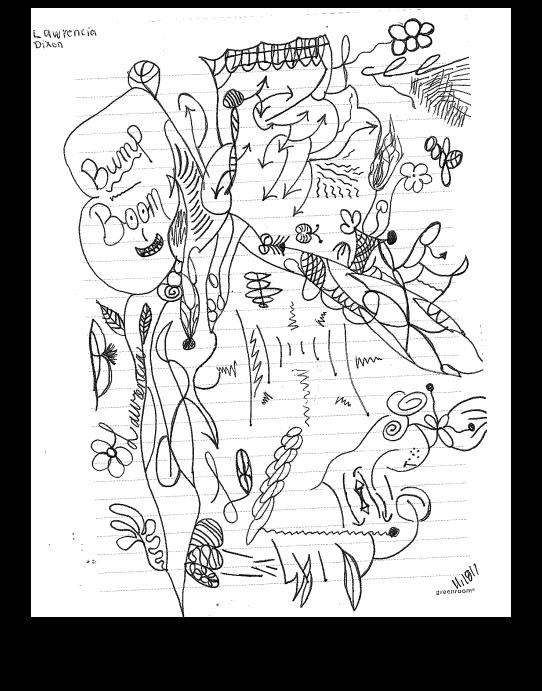
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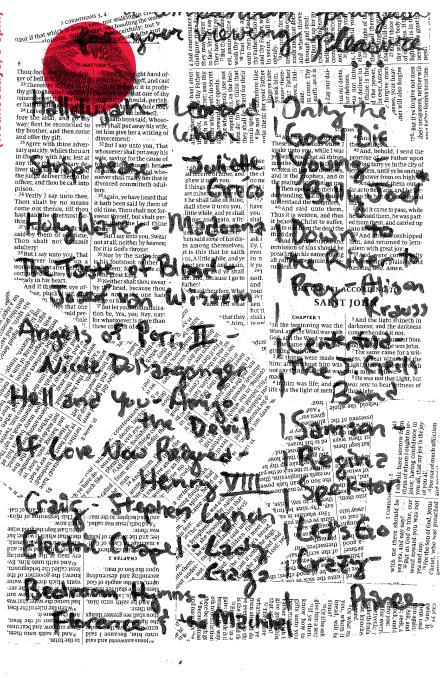


SUNDAYS 8-10PM





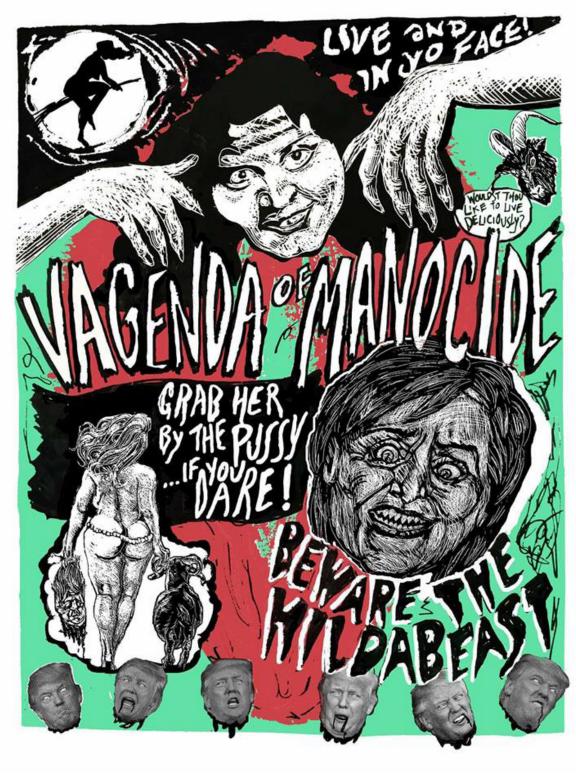
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Stacey Early

## Radio Schedule Spring 2018

#### Sunday

**12-2am** Something Completely Different

2-5am The Happy Hardcore Hour

5-7am Be Kind, Please Rewind

7-9am Terinah

9-12pm Neverland Ballroom

12-2pm Down The Hatch

2-4pm The Bryce is Right

4-6pm The World Beat

6-8pm Generations of Jazz

8-10pm MonsterGabe

10-12am Vagenda of Manocide

#### **Monday**

12-2am CarsonKehres

2-5am Avant-Garbagé

5-7am Paige Kappes

7-9am Paco Chaos / The Pacobilly Hour

\*10-12pm wrfl Alumni Show

12-2pm The Show w/ Ronnie

2-4pm Philosophy Bakes Bread

4-6pm Asleep At The Wheel

6-8pm Centro-Sur

8-10pm The Percy Trout Hour

10-12am Old School Hip-Hop

#### **Tuesday**

**12-2am** Matt's Metal Mortuary

2-5am Anarchy In The U.K.

5-7am Eddie Crowe

7-9am The Classical Hour

\*10-12pm The Bindle

**12-2pm** Haley R.

2-4pm La's Galaxy

4-6pm OneThousandHeroes/35mm

6-8pm ThruTheVibe

8-10pm Squids Will Be Squids

10-12am Live Action Radio Play

#### Wednesday

12-2am melanjolly

2-5am Andy Dates a Vampire

5-7am The Pearl of The Clam

7-9am In The Pocket

\*10-12pm It is Wednesday My Dudes

12-2pm The Humpday Bump

2-4pm Col Kisling's Sound Brigade

4-6pm Green Talks / Campus Voices

6-8pm BootsAndBirds

8-10pm wrfl Live

10-12am David Zhang

#### **Thursday**

**12-2am** Mike After Midnight

**2-5am** The Anna-log Hour

**5-7am** TBD

7-9am Trivial Thursdays

\*10-12pm Toast and Jams

**12-2pm** Performance Tomorrow

2-4pm K Simon

4-5pm Ethan Fedele

5-7pm Russkoe Radio

**7-8pm** Indie-gestion

8-10pm Raining In Lexington

10-12am The Musical Box

#### **Friday**

12-2am Jazz Five Spot

**2-5am** Morgan Thomas

5-7am Kenleigh

**7-9am** rotkaepp / The Renaissance

\*10-12pm Whatevr Works

12-2pm The Grid

2-4pm Rolling With Tess

4-5pm The Stick Shift w/ Matt

5-6pm The Weekend Wave

6-8pm Phantom Power Double Hr.

8-10pm Unkle Foddy

10-12am Human Music

#### Saturday

12-2am Best Coast Bump

**2-5am** Trenton Upchurch

5-7am Us In The Morning

7-9am Sela

9-10am Ages 3 & Up

**10-12pm** The Blue Yodel

12-2pm Indrani Gets Next To You

2-4pm LizzieG

4-6pm All Things Heavy!

6-8pm El Tren Latino

8-10pm Psychadelicatessen

10-12pm Serious Moonlite

<sup>\*</sup>Weekdays 9-10am Democracy Now

#### Radio Free Lexington, 1/3 2018

#### The Art of DJing

by Ben Allen

The common image of the contemporary DJ might show someone playing music for people at a club or party to help suspend reality in the distractions found in loud festivities. The usual setup for contemporary DJing has the DJ standing at a table or booth with a laptop selecting tracks from a vast array of music files. Smoke, dazzling lights, and loud music fill the room and people in the crowd spend the night letting inhibitions dissolve.

As for listening to music in general, the experience has become more connected to online programming services such as Pandora and YouTube, wherein metadata and algorithms replace the need for a human DJ. Songs are selected based on the preferences of the listener who can like or dislike offerings from the computer. The music itself, now fully electronic as a media file automatically delivered by a software program, has become, in a certain sense, artificial and inhuman.

Between the state of contemporary DJing and the artificiality of modern 'listening', as well as the effects these phenomena have upon listeners, we find a problem—something has been lost. The goal of this paper is to reveal both the nature of what has been lost—The Art of DJing—and the potential impact it might have for the good of people listening. I will argue that The Art of DJing—playing music for others—offers an opportunity for people to gather in a mutual appreciation of art through movement, contemplation, and appreciation of history or collective memory. Examining these three potential interactions that can occur between the DJ and the listener, one might view the Art of DJing as an "American ceremony." The DJ, using very specific tools and techniques, artfully crafts an experience for the listener

of special, specific ideas; and c) a potential linkage of personal and social histories in hearing songs one might remember or in learning about music and artists from the past and the context in which they created their works. This ceremony would intentionally serve to benefit the listener in these physical, mental, and potentially spiritual senses.

To make this argument, I will give attention to the functional tools and techniques of the DJ in order to show how The Art of DJing can serve a purpose guite similar to the revolutionary aesthetic framework Sen No Rikyu devised and developed for chanoyu, or The Way/Art of Tea (tea ceremony). I will first examine the equipment used in the DJ Ceremony and show how these items are similar to the utensils used in chanoyu, as the aesthetics of both arts "is to be sought in the relationship of people to things"1. An examination of Music and Setting will show their importance as the DJ creates the environment and an experience for the listener, much as the tea host would for their quest. I will then look at the importance of the body in the Art of DJing, comparing the movements of the DJ to the temae (ritualized movements) of chanoyu. Finally, I will connect these comparisons toward a new understanding of The Art of DJing—one that actively benefits the lives of listeners rather than simply serving to distract or placate their senses.

#### **Equipment**

For The Art of DJing, the primary tool would be the turntable (as opposed to a CD player or digital file playing device). While digital mastering techniques for CDs and media files have been able to consistently improve the quality of sound for playback, digital music files will always remain only a "mapping" of the music produced and recorded in a studio. The vinyl record, however, serves to provide the most direct transfer of the studio sound

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#### Radio Free Lexington, 1/3 2018

through to the listener. Many will argue this point, but I do not wish to compare the two formats in terms of a quantifiable range of sound reproduced or recorded. Rather, this conclusion that favors the vinyl record derives from a comparison relating the analog experience to the digital experience—the former is simply more physical than the latter, as a needle meets a groove instead of a lens reading a code or software reading back zeros and ones.

The turntable is the apparatus used to play vinyl records. Regardless of whether a DJ procures a new or vintage turntable, these remain specialty items that serve only this single purpose. For the Art of DJing, the DJ will require two of these machines, situated on either side of the DJ's mixer, which will be discussed next.

The mixer allows the DJ to select between the two turn-tables using a crossfader, adjust the sound of the music using the volume faders and an EQ system (controlling the high, mid, and low frequencies of the sounds), and continue the stream of songs from one to the next without significant gaps. He will also use the mixer to cue the 'next' record with his headphones. A skilled DJ will select songs with the mixer device in mind, using the crossfader and cuing with headphones to blend the end of one song into the next, either matching beat patterns or combining other textural elements of the music. (Note: The mixer has several additional functions and elements, but those mentioned above are the most essential).

An amplifier and speakers are required for sending the sound out to the listener. A stereo line runs from the mixer to the amplifier. Lines then run out to the speaker array, consisting of at least two speakers, right and left, used to create a stereo environment. Additional speaker components may consist of a subwoofer, used to enhance low, bass frequencies, and speakers of various sizes to increase the overall sound picture.

Just as the water kettle, the tea bowl, the tea whisk, and all the other utensils used in chanoyu are respected when manipulated by the tea host and guests, the DJ's use of the DJ Ceremony equipment must remain measured, disciplined, skillful, and accurate.

#### **Music And Setting**

If we compare the aforementioned DJ Ceremony items to the utensils used in chanoyu, then the records selected by the DJ for their listeners would be the tea. More precisely, the sound of the records would be the offering of tea made from host to guest. As mentioned earlier, vinvl records may present the clearest, truest form of what has been recorded. In a recording studio, for instance, the sound coming from voice or instrument, passing through a microphone, into a mixing board, and onto magnetic tape has no gaps. It is energy moving from human being to a recording substance—not an electronic rendering of sound, but something material. The sound from the tape is played into a machine that etches grooves into a plate and then that plate is used to press a relief of the grooves into vinyl. When a turntable's needle plays across the groove, the sound connects ones ear to the voices sung and instruments and played in the studio. (Note: not all studios or recordings follow this exact pathway, and many vinyl renderings of music do involve some manner of digital processing at some point in their genesis. However, the vinyl record still presents the clearest "picture" of what happened when the music was recorded and connects the listener to that.) In the same way a bowl of matcha (powdered green tea used in chanoyu) connects a tea host's guest to the earth from whence it came, the vinyl record connects the listener to a real experience of the music's creation. The DJ selects the records to be heard by the listener as well as the order in which they are heard, while manipulating the equipment in such a

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way as to guide the experience of listener from one song to the next.

The ideal setting for the DJ Ceremony would be an out-door venue, preferably in good weather or under cover from rain. This allows the music to encounter the natural, seasonal elements, and to attract listeners who might be passing by (as well as those informed of the ceremony). The DJ would offer any listener the opportunity to stop and enjoy the music offered, while also connecting to the season, time of day, and other natural/social factors involved in the single event. This resembles the chakai form of chanoyu, in which many people partake in the tea ceremony at once and wherein the public is often invited. But there would be no admission price for this free, public experience of the DJ Ceremony and listeners would enjoy the event all at once rather than in small groups.

In this manner, it might also provide the context wherein the energy of Soft Power—the term defined and developed by Joseph Nye—might break down significant aesthetic and possibly even social boundaries. Nye writes: "Simply put, Soft Power is attractive power."<sup>2</sup>

It is important to outline all the ways in which a passerby might encounter the DJ Ceremony. They might hear something they like, familiar or unfamiliar, and stop to listen. Or perhaps they see people gathering, friends or strangers, and feel compelled to join in the group. Or perhaps they are simply curious at the ceremony itself or a particular strange, new sound. Or perhaps they are completely off-put by the entire affair. In all cases, even in the last, something has been stirred within the listener. The power has had an effect. Even for the disturbed listener there is a challenge—respectfully walk away or get publically angry. In the latter case, their anger would be called out into the public for examination.

#### Temae

Etsuko Kato describes temae as "the rules of body movement to make tea, or body movement governed by such rules." She compares temae to "its closest Western counterparts: good manners, dance, and discipline" going on to say it "mostly approximates discipline..., importantly entails good manners..., and partly resembles dance." She also states:

"The most unique characteristic of temae as a method of discipline, however, lies in its articulation in the manipulation of tea utensils...The 'maneuver' of temae is twofold: one is the precise placement of tea utensils in the right places in the tearoom. The other...is the precise management of tea utensils."

In his article, Rethinking Live Electronic Music, Paul Vandemast-Bell describes the movements of the DJ manipulating a record through a technique known as scratching, wherein the DJ quickly moves the record back and forth so that the needle figuratively scratches the sound:

"In turntable scratching, the vinyl record is a particular kind of interface between physical gesture and the sonic trace of that gesture in the sound that flows out of the loudspeakers. The turntablist's gesture is the means by which they bring the recording back into the live; it is the trace of the human action that imprints itself upon the recorded material."

He also quotes noted DJ Jeff Mills who, in speaking about his label's record sleeves and labels showing close up shots of different body parts used in the work of DJing, says:

#### Radio Free Lexington, 1/3 2018

"The hands, ears, arms, and finger were the parts of the body that I felt were the most important and that should be displayed in a manner where each part stands alone. These are the parts that physically make the music happen."

I would argue that these three ideas synthesize in the Art of DJing—the work of a DJ (host) in playing music for listeners (guests). The work of the DJ is a physical action. A skillful DJ's work is disciplined physical action intending to present music in a manner of great quality and care for the ears and experience of the listener. This special discipline involves the successful manipulation of the DJ equipment and music (vinyl records) so as to weave sounds together toward the connection of one human (the DJ) to another (the listener) in a single, shared experience.

#### Conclusion

"The aesthetic of chanoyu is to be sought in the relationship of people to things; its ethic is to be found in the relationship of people and people."

For anyone who might stop to listen at our DJ Ceremony, the DJ would offer guests an opportunity to encounter something fundamentally human in this experience. Perhaps the rhythm and beat compel the listener to begin dancing. However appropriate or wild or fancied or goofy, it would come from some place pure and not inebriated. The dancer would have a good feeling from within and engage the body in movement and exercise, all beneficial.

Possibly the music carries with it a social message or one of strong emotional content. While the former might inspire the listener and encourage good action in the name of helping others or overcoming hardship (many elements of dub reggae and soul music, for instance, have this quality), the latter might reconnect them to feelings of love or friendship.

From song to song, the listener might be swept up in a wave of nostalgic memory or possibly even find a spark of connectivity to a style of music or an artist yet unheard. This would then connect the listener to both their own history and the ever-expanding history of music itself and the context of its creation.

As a group of people and in this single moment, moving from song to song in the setting of the DJ Ceremony, the same ethic of chanoyu is evoked—that of bringing people together for something good.

(Endnotes) (Paul Varley and Isao Kumakura, Tea in Japan, p.29)	1
(Joseph Nye, Soft Power, p.6	2
(Etsuko Kato, The Tea Ceremony, p.26)	3
(Etsuko Kato, The Tea Ceremony, p.31)	4
(Paul Vandemast-Bell, Rethinking Live Electronic Music, p.243)	5
(Paul Vandemast-Bell, Rethinking Live Electronic Music, p.245)	6
(Paul Varley and Isao Kumakura, Tea in Japan, p.29)	7

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# Field Report: **Big Ears 2017**

Anna Meredith • Dhakabraka • Blonde Readhead w/
ACME • Nief Norf • Gyan Ryley • Jem Cohen Gravity
Hill Sound + Image • Lisa Moore • Alvin Curran • Wilco • Tortoise • Meredith Monk • Sir Richard Bishop •
Xylouris White • Musica Elettronica Viva • Colin Stetson • Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith • Deerhoof • On Fillmore
• Knowxville Symphony Orchestra directed by Aram
Demirjian • Gavin Bryars Ensemble: Jesus Blood Never Failed Me Yet • Oliver Coates • Rangda • Colleen

Who would have ever guessed that one of the top avant-garde music festivals in the world would pop up in Eastern Tennessee?

by **Matt Gibson** *DJ* 

Four days of genre-defying, boundary-pushing, attentive-listening, sonic exploration unlike any other I've found, Big Ears programs to music lovers, not big crowds, and creates listening experiences you won't find at any of the big summer outdoor festivals. Here's my report from the field last March:

Anna Meredith - This Scottish composer/performer's 5-piece band was an awesome first act to catch. The first time I've seen a guitar/drums/cello/tuba/clarinet combo, but the overall effect was that of a multi-layered Battles-meets-Philip Glass kind of electronica which sounded awesome.

**Dhakabraka** – Ukranian folk quartet comes out dressed in traditional Eastern European garb, complete with super-tall, black fur hats. Pounding drums and cello and accordion with multiple-part close-harmony singing that reminded me of some deep Appalachian sounds.

Blonde Redhead w/ American Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME) – Performing their 2004 album, Misery is a Butterfly, Blonde Redhead still sounded tight and had that "we're all foreign and very chill and cool" thing going on.

Friday 3/24 (1:00pm-1:00am)

Nief-Norf Performs Burns – UK alum Andrew Bliss kicked off my day with a 15-movement, 75-minute solo percussion piece (with projections) byv composer Christopher Burns. Bliss used the entire stage at the Square Room with various percussion (none of it a drum set) and executed delicate, intricate performance of the experimental composition on everything from snare drum to xylophone to coffee can to gongs to triangle to rain stick... Bliss's execution and focus were exceptional.

**Gyan Ryley –** Ornate, flamenco-influenced fingerstyle guitar that reminded me of Peter Walker.

Jem Cohen Gravity Hill Sound + Image - Cohen's works were a major part of last year's cinematic offerings, and the Gravity Hill performances brought a live aspect to some of his short films as Big Ears musicians live-impro

vised to them. The set I caught at the Bijou Theatre featured both members of Xylouris White as well as Fugazi's Guy Picciotto playing to film that Cohen shot in Knoxville.

Lisa Moore - Performed on a grand piano beneath the adorned dome of St. John's Cathedral, Lisa Moore's piano recital was magnificent. The concert was comprised largely of Philip Glass compositions, many of which were busy, complicated, and packed with notes astoundingly Moore played everything from memory. Others were purely sublime; serene notes floated from the open-top instrument and hung delicately in the air. As far as I could tell, few, if any, pictures were taken of the performance - it would have been gouache to so much as blink loudly, much less snap a shutter.

Alvin Curran - John Cage student and Musica Elettronia Viva founder Alvin Curran sat at the intersection of a full-scale electric keyboard (attached to a computer loaded with samples) and a baby grand piano. Curran triggered all kinds of crazy sounds - totally unpredictable of a wolf howling, traffic sounds, glass breaking, ethnic singing, frantic banjo, indistinguishable noise - and layered them on top of one another, jumping and twitching, seemingly uncovering surprises even unto himself.

At one point he moved to the baby grand and started playing a very traditional easy listening jazz theme, casually putting everyone at ease, before reaching over with his right hand and triggering bursts of nihilistic noise on the keyboard. Everyone cheered and applauded; the joke wasn't lost on this audience!

Wilco - Honestly, I had some concerns about how the most "mainstream" (or at least: popular) band of the festival would do; would being juxtaposed against so much wild experimentalism make them seem even more tame? Actually, no. Wilco was pretty great, playing old faves from Yankee Hotel Foxtrot and some rockers from recent albums; plus they got far out! Drummer Glenn Kotche and guitarist Nels Cline were definitely willing to push the envelope and create chaos and dissonance (and the rest of the dudes even got on board sometimes too).

Tortoise - I love to watch this quintet of multi-instrumentalists shift around their mirror-image stage set-up: 2 facing drum kits with xylophone/marimba behind each one, 2 synths positioned down stage of the drums tight next to each other with guitar/bass behind each of them, each song featuring a slightly different combination of players & instruments. Polyrhythmic instrumental rock stretched back to 2001's Standards and featured great cuts from Beacons of Ancestorship and 2016's The Catastrophist. Contrasting rhythms, competing and interlocking grooves, Meredith Monk – The MacArthur "Genius" Grant recipient explored all kinds of functions of the human voice: singing, breathing, clicking – and then performed them in combinations at the same time. Very few intelligible lyrics (preferring vocables and abstract sounds) and intrigvuing progressions from one sound to another, Monk made all of the other sounds that the human voice can make when it isn't speaking or singing.

Sir Richard Bishop – Bishop displayed an array of his Moroccan, West African, and gypsy styles with his deftly-picked electric guitar. He closed his performance in St. John's Cathedral with an adventurous, raucous onslaught unparalleled through the rest of the set, a cathartic ending.

**Xylouris White** – The duo of Greek oud player George Xylouris and Australian drummer Jim White have turned lots of heads over the past few years, opening on tours for both Swans and Kurt Vile, and they do put on a good show. Xylouris whistled and shouted and strummed open strings wildly in a cacophonic trance before returning to their signature Mediterranean themes.

Musica Elettronica Viva – Experimental pioneers are now the coolest great-grandfathers in music. "We need revolution – but we also need revelation."

**Colin Stetson: Sorrow -** Saxophonist Colin Stetson re-imagined

Gorecki's 3rd Symphony for an 11-piece ensemble featuring violin, viola, electric guitar, drum set, synth, multiple reed players, and vocals (performed, passionately, by Stetson's sister Megan). Classical composition that even incorporated black metal blast beasts (by Liturgy's Greg Fox), the effect was a moving, dramatic piece that suggests an entirely new direction for orchestral music with exciting new possibilities.

Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith – I did not see this psychedelic electronica set coming, but it bathed me in some wonderful, far-out vibes. Smith stood small on stage with her Buchla synthesizer and some other knobs-and-faders gear but had tremendous, colorful abstract projections behind her. "Morphing shapes and changing textures" would describe both the sounds & visuals alike. Did I already say how beautifully psychedelic this set was?

Deerhoof - Art-rock powerhouse Deerhoof closed the night with their high-energy power-pop. Shredding guitars, insane drumming, and a bouncing bass player dressed as a magic piece of white bread(?) - it was some great rock action. At one point the drummer pointed out the fact that none of the four members on stage were original to the band; then one of the quitarists talked about the first time he saw Deerhoof - I found it surreal and hilarious. 37

On Fillmore - The duo of percussionist (and UK School of Music graduate) Glenn Kotche and upright bassist Darrin Gray explored all kinds of musical combinations, using toy instruments, guitar, and a wide array of percussion, to both serious and humorous effect. At one point Kotche was trying to bow a metal chime with one hand while swinging something on a chain over his head with the other; having a tough time, he stops and says, "This is hard. Why am I doing this?"

Knoxville Symphony Orchestra directed by Aram Demirjian – Talk about getting the orchestras out of the concert hall - the KSO didn't even play on the stage! Spread across a great deal of the floor of the Mill & Mine, the orchestra spoke up for the role of a traditional orchestra in the broad musical conversation that was happening over the weekend.

Gavin Bryars Ensemble: Jesus Blood Never Failed Me Yet – Composer and double-bassist Bryars' 1971 composition, played by his own ensemble on their first trip to the US. The composition is based around a field recording of an elderly vagabond singing a tune, looped continuously for the entire piece while the ensemble swells and recedes below – somber and gorgeous.

Oliver Coates – the young cellist (and Radiohead instrumentalist) made some gnarly sounds with compositions from Squarepusher, lannis Xenakis, and more.

Rangda - one of my highlights for the weekend: the power trio of Ben Chasny, Chris Corsano, and Sir Richard Bishop. It had been almost 6 years since I last saw them at WRFL's Boomslang Festival, and they had put out two new albums since. Would they even play "songs" at all or just guitar freak-out to infinity? They were great - tight, interlocking guitar lines, bold solos - the trio was firing on all cylinders playing tracks from 2016's The Heretic's Bargain and 2012's Formerly Extinct. I watched Rick Bishop literally shred a pick into nothingness right before my eyes.

**Colleen –** French multi-instrumentalist layered plucked viola, melodica, and vocals to create soft, ethereal sounds. It was a gentle way to end a wild weekend of music.

Big Ears 2018 is March 22-25 in Knoxville, TN.

Artists include Godspeed You! Black Emperor • Lightning Bolt • the music of Alice Coltrane • Bang On A Can All Stars • Diamanda Galas • Jenny Hval • Jaga Jazzist • Kid Koala • Steve Gunn• Bela Fleck • The Thing.





### Radio Free Lexington, 1/3 2018

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Anonymous	
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i kept the soul alive, and in return, i got my life back i remembered hearing the word "motown" somewhere once before and remembered it was beautiful i went deep into the deep cuts every week discovered a new gem from the "old school" as i walked the streets of cincinnati to escape from the way it felt to lose someone it was otis who was with me so i wasn't lonely when my love held me for the first time it was al who was with us to nudge me out of the friend bb woke me up in the morning gladys danced with me in the basement of kroger and i can't believe some people don't get this. so i press the red button and i get next to you

i like your style, jermaine i got you, james when everyone in the world has built a wall and condemned emotionality written off love like it's a thing of the past i'm here to turn back time soul gives me hope that there's somewhere to put all this angst you've got it too, and if you don't your life is boring but put it in music sing along even if you're no good dance even if you have two left feet soul isn't dead no matter what you listen to you hear its influences and to pay whatever respect i could i kept it alive and in return i got my life

back.

# 7-9 AM EVERY THURSDAY! WWW.TRIVIALTHURSDAYS.COM Join WRFL lifer Mick Jeffries and co-host Leif Erickson, along with a cadre of Lex-centric guests

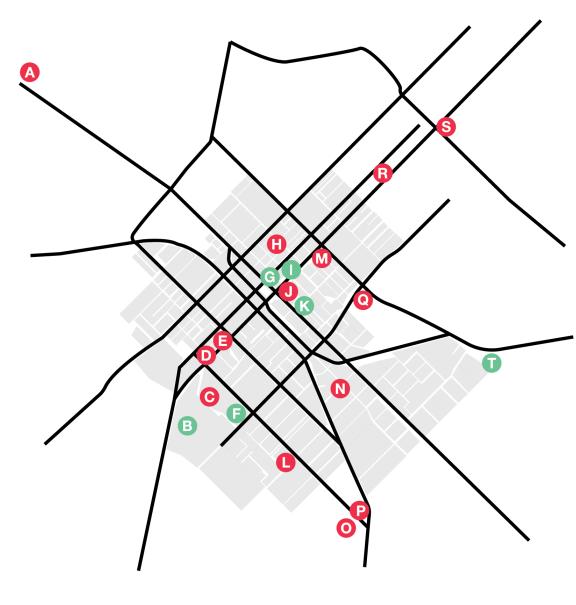
Join WRFL lifer **Mick Jeffries** and co-host Leif Erickson, along with a cadre of Lex-centric guests each week for two hours of #allthethings. It's all about community builders, do-gooders, artists, musicians, educators, and run-of-the-mill geeks, nerds, and weirdos ... your kind of people: Admit it!

**Trivial Thursdays** — It's not just for breakfast anymore; *it's a bedtime snack if you're listening in Tokyo.* 

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# WRFL'S Lexington Map

- WRFL Underwriters
- Music Venues
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- 🕕 Carnegie Center
- Institute 193
- Alfalfa Restaraunt
- **K** Downtown Arts Center
- GirlsGirlsGirls Burritos / Best Friend Bar

- M Doodles
- N Smiley Pete Publishing
- Puccini's
- Bourbon n' Toulouse
- The Lyric Theatre
- B Al's Bar
- S Broomwagon
- Cosmic Charlie's

## Charts Fall 2017

**Courtney Barnett & Kurt Vile** 

Lotta Sea Lice

Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings

Coul of a Waman

Soul of a Woman

**ALVVAYS** 

Antisocialites

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The Bad Signs

**Black Magic Moments** 

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Iron & Wine

Beast Epic

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Shamir

Revelations

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King Krule

The OOZ

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Giraffage Too Real

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Mura Masa

Mura Masa

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Julien Baker

Turn Out The Lights

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**LCD Soundsystem** 

american dream

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Let The World Be Flooded Out

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**Flat Worms** 

Flat Worms

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Loney dear

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Backwater

The Zombies

Odessey & Oracle

Weaves

Wide Open

**The Cactus Channel** 

Stay A While

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dreambeaches

Disappearing Act EP

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Queens of the Stone Age Villains

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**Florist** 

If Blue Could Be Happiness

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Tilted Heads (Local)

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**Torres** 

Three Futures

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**Destroyer** 

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**Shigeto** 

New Monday

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Vista Kicks

Booty Shakers Ball

King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard

Polygondwanaland

**Tyler Childers** 

Purgatory

-The She's

all female rock and roll quartet

St. Vincent

Masseduction

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