



NET RESULTS When he's not playing in a KISS tribute band, Benny Doro puckers up and gets cozy with the Internet, which is helping artists of all kinds spread the word. Pages 4 and 5

Fairchild makes radio waves

Unique new world music format goes on air

By Gloria Russo

Cal Koat couldn't sleep Sunday night.

The International Program Director of the newest commercial FM multicultural radio station CHKG FM 96.1, has been waiting for this day to come for over a decade.

On Monday, *World Beat Wake Up* with local broadcaster Rob Daniels, launched the new station's international programming line-up. The station, now located at West Broadway and Cambie Street, is serving up the best of world music to Vancouver listeners. Starting weekday mornings at 6 a.m., listeners can now turn their radio dial to world music and world-beat music, feature news, artist interviews and entertainment for nine hours a day Mondays to Saturdays on CHKG FM 96.1. The rest of the station's lineup is Chinese language programming.

"This kind of music is untried. It's the first in North America," said director Koat, who dreamed up the concept of its unique multicultural radio program. "People want change. They're tired of the same old thing."

The station's mandate, according to Koat, is pioneering new and uncharted territory that is perceived as risky by other stations. It also aims to give local musicians exposure. On their first day of its international programming, for example, the station ran just over 50 per cent local content. And because

they don't want to isolate the mainstream, the international programming will maintain mostly English-speaking content that shies away from music that's too alternative or in Koat's words "too tribal"

"The local world music community has a voice (here)," said Koat, stressing that to include local content on a program is far from a "necessary evil," as so many local artists can be viewed as some of the best in the world. Listeners can expect musicians such as Dal-Dil-Vog, whose Bhangra music reflects a combination of Indian and western rock; The Paperboys, a celtic Vancouver band; and Alpha Yaya Diallo, renowned around the world for the finest in the Guinean style of guitar playing.

piners. *Crossing Cultures*, Koat's three-year-old show, the blueprint for the International show, plays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., while Sunday is entirely Chinese radio.

World music holds a certain familiarity with the listener, said Koat, as it brings together a broad range of traditional ethnic sounds and cultural influences, while worldbeat music is more narrowly focused and includes the pop music of the world. A listener may hear "Canto-pop" for example, while tuning in.

Koat said that world music and worldbeat music is the fastest growing style of music in popularity. Together with Virgin Records Mega Store, the station has the ambitious task of creating a new standard for today's

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The international programming is targeting a market made up of second generation immigrants or cultural consumers who feel a tug towards their roots, as well as the mainstream listener who wants something different.

The schedule for September offers worldbeat music bright and early each weekday, starting at 6 a.m., followed by two hours each of Caribbean, Latin American, and Italian pop music. Saturdays will wake listeners up with music from Malaysia, Indonesia and the Phillip-

world music by creating a top ten list.

"We're creating a template for others to follow," said host Daniels, who is impressed by the relative freedom and independence of the show. "Here you can interact with people, play music, and fall in love with more of it—it's wrapped up in the community," he said.

The station was established after the CRTC allowed for a license to promote multiculturalism in the Lower Mainland market. It will serve 20 distinct communities in 15 different lan-



Spinning the tunes for the new radio station FM 96.1's world music format are Cal Koat, International program director (left) and morning man Rob Daniels. Photo: Doug Shanks

guages by bringing in a variety of experienced hosts of different backgrounds.

By combining the Chinese language program both on FM and its sister AM channel (CJVB), the company is able to provide Chinese programming on a 24-hour basis, while filling another need with the international programming on the FM channel.

In essence, the international programming is "piggybacking" on the Chinese language market, said Koat. But critics of the new station say the station's owners, Fairchild Media, used a CRTC desire for more multicultural programming to gain a license for what is primarily Chinese-language station,—a market already served by existing radio stations. Fairchild's world music format beat out several other proposals, including a proposed alternative rock station, which had widespread public support.

Meanwhile, Koat continues to beam with energy—a tell-tale sign of things to come.

"I've been broadcasting for 15 years," he said, "this is a dream come true for me."

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