

[E-BOOK] FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio

FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio

Richard Neer

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#1104724 in Books Villard 2001-09-25 2001-09-25 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x .12 x 6.00l, 1.28 #File Name: 0812992652384 pages | File size: 51.Mb

Richard Neer : FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great accounting of the Golden Age of Progressive free form radioBy KDRichard Neer has created a great accounting of the Golden Age of progressive free form radio. While this focuses a great deal on WNEW FM where Richard worked, it gives insight to the whole genre of radio as well as sister stations such as WMMR in Philadelphia ("the radio station") as well as similar stations in LA, Cleveland, etc. If you

grew up during this period listening to progressive radio its a must read to get the inside scoop on your favorite DJs and how it all evolved and devolved. Scott Muni, Carol Miller, Allison Steele the Nightbird, Dennis Elsas, Pete Fornatale, and many others (some still on satellite radio and local radio, are discussed). Great insight into the radio and rock and roll industries as well as their effect on the culture and the cultures effect on them.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Book! Been a fan of WNEW-FM since I ...By Tom D.Great Book! Been a fan of WNEW-FM since I was a child. Miss the station in the format that mattered. Richard was there and knows why the station isn't. I wanted an electronic copy for easy reading while traveling.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. When Rock LivedBy Bill SlocumIf you grew up like I did in the 1970s greater New York metro area, you will want to read Richard Neer's memoir of life at WNEW-FM during its hard-rock heyday just for the blasts of nostalgic recognition. Radio handles like "Rosko", "Scottso", and "The Nightbird" become vivid personalities, and you are reconnected to a time when people anxiously awaited the latest Moody Blues LP. But even without such attachments going in, you will find "FM" a pretty absorbing read on many levels.First, there's the gossip behind-the-scenes aspect, of discovering who didn't get along with whom among a group of high-profile radio disc jockeys to whom the big shots of the day, like Led Zeppelin and Elton John, came a-calling. They called WNEW the place "where rock lives" for a reason.Then there's the aspect of WNEW-FM's place as an oasis of free-form radio while the medium was changing all around them, a period that ran roughly from just before Neer's arrival as a weekend jock in 1971 to the murder of John Lennon in 1980. The money still came in for a while after that, but as Neer writes, the dream was over.Finally, there's the fact Neer is a sensible, candid observer of all around him, who can describe lovingly and at some length everything from his first broadcasting experience on college radio to his initial trepidation when cornered by Jonathan Schwartz, a velvet-throated rock-jock mainstay at the time. With a voice like that, Neer thought, Schwartz had to be gay."I would learn later that my fears were completely unfounded, and that Jonno went through women like [fellow WNEW legend Scott] Muni went through scotch."I suspect Neer and Schwartz aren't on speaking terms today, not for that so much as a hilarious anecdote he shares about Schwartz, two willing bedmates, and Schwartz's idea of mood music, his own pre-recorded voice on the radio. But Neer's loss of a Christmas card is our gain.It's like that the whole way through, Neer explaining the unsavory as well as the heroic aspects of WNEW's rise to fame. Sex and drugs, yes, though more the former than the latter, unless ego counts as a drug. That the jocks had in spades. When Alison Steele a.k.a. "The Nightbird", sensed a new female jock WNEW had hired was a threat to her domain, she got the woman fired. Schwartz eschewed the disk jockey term for one he coined himself: "Jocque du disques". For a lot of jocks, the term "free-form" meant playing whatever they wanted to, and sneering anytime the word "Arbitron" came up.They're a great bunch all the same. Neer makes clear his overall admiration for their varying personalities and what they did. It's hard not to envy Neer his "Almost-Famous" style proximity to the entire gang and the world they represented, a world that arose greenfield-like in the late 1960s from the underused hinterlands of the FM dial just as rock music became polytonal, expansive and willfully reckless. Neer even fills in the details of the wider rock/FM scene without losing his focus on WNEW.He takes sidetrips to California, where free-form programming was taken even more seriously and crashed even more spectacularly than in New York. The last 100 pages deal with WNEW after free-form's heyday ended, and are far less vital reading than the 1971-81 section, as new wave and grunge began pushing hard rock into the oldies circuit.Draggy or not, Neer finds a way to bring it all together, not in such a way as to draw in the uninitiated (his prose is solid but never immersive) but to reward the curious. Radio lovers will enjoy this deep dive into a world, still a part of many living memories, that feels a million miles away.

"It was all so honest, before the end of our collective innocence. Top Forty jocks screamed and yelled and sounded mightier than God on millions of transistor radios. But on FM radio it was all spun out for only you. On a golden web by a master weaver driven by fifty thousand magical watts of crystal clear power . . . before the days of trashy, hedonistic dumbspeak and disposable three-minute ditties . . . in the days where rock lived at many addresses in many cities."from FMAs a young man, Richard Neer dreamed of landing a job at WNEW in New Yorkone of the revolutionary FM stations across the country that were changing the face of radio by rejecting strict formatting and letting disc jockeys play whatever they wanted. He felt that when he got there, hed have made the big time. Little did he know hed have shaped rock history as well.FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio chronicles the birth, growth, and death of free-form rock-and-roll radio through the stories of the movements flagship stations. In the late sixties and early seventiesat stations like KSAN in San Francisco, WBCN in Boston, WMMR in Philadelphia, KMET in Los Angeles, WNEW, and othersdisc jockeys became the gatekeepers, critics, and gurus of new music. Jocks like Scott Muni, Vin Scelsa, Jonathan Schwartz, and Neer developed loyal followings and had incredible influence on their listeners and on the early careers of artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Genesis, the Cars, and many others.Full of fascinating firsthand stories, FM documents the commodification of an iconoclastic phenomenon, revealing how counterculture was coopted and consumed by the mainstream. Richard Neer was an eyewitness to, and participant in, this history. FM is the tale of his exhilarating ride.From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers WeeklyIn 1979, the Ramones declared the end of the century. To many music insiders, this

proclamation rang true: Rock and roll radio or free-form FM that allowed DJs to select music was dead, so there was no sense in dragging out the 20th century when it had already crested. Born after an FCC ruling in 1964, free form was never as "free" as it sounded. In this affably told history of music freaks vs. corporate monsters, Neer reveals that FM was a doomed marriage of commerce and creativity. In fact, FM was molded into a competitor of jingle- and single-heavy top-40 AM radio. Suddenly, there was pressure on musicians to craft quality albums (take the Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*), as DJs (like Murray the K) sometimes played entire sides to compensate for the lack of advertising. First a jock at an AM college station, Neer went on to land a program directorship at New York's WNEW-FM. His 30 years there inform the bulk of the narrative, though glimpses into the evolution of other New York and West Coast power stations are offered. Readers will get an inside, but not necessarily enthralling, view of the legendary station owners and managers, jocks and rock stars of the free form era. It's important that this story be told, but Neer's voice doesn't come across compellingly on paper. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

Neer began his career in professional radio during that brief, shining moment in radio history between the late Sixties and early Seventies that saw the rise of FM and "free form" radio. Much like Michael Keith's collection of oral histories, *Voices in the Purple Haze: Underground Radio and the Sixties* (Praeger, 1997), this work is not a definitive overview of the birth of FM radio or of free-form radio itself but is rather an entertaining, informative memoir focusing primarily on the author's experiences at WNEW-FM in New York. (Related activity at other New York-area stations and at a few West Coast stations is discussed as well.) Brief accounts of appropriate historical background are included. The countless personal anecdotes and tricks of the trade more than make up for the uneven coverage and the confusing time sequencing of chapters. This book will undoubtedly be of great interest to those seeking to break into big-time radio, particularly alternative stations, as some things never change. For larger public libraries and academic libraries supporting broadcasting programs. Angela Weiler, SUNY at Morrisville Lib. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *The New Yorker*

In this hybrid of history and memoir, Neer, a veteran of New York City's WNEW, recalls the brief moment when FM radio, in its infancy, coincided with the extraordinary vitality of sixties rock, and FM stations became important countercultural institutions. Free to play (and say) what they wanted, disk jockeys concocted a heady, often unpredictable brew of extended album tracks, shaggy-dog stories, and political commentary. This mythic period ended in the early seventies, when station owners began instituting controls designed to maximize revenue, including more stringent musical formatting and predetermined "playlists." The best parts of this bittersweet account provide off-microphone glimpses of FM pioneers like Boston's manic and sarcastic Charles Laquidara, and New York's sultry Nightbird, Alison Steele. Copyright 2005 The New Yorker