

Student Radio: “A good friend of New Zealand music”

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Abstract: Student radio stations in New Zealand have a long history of supporting local alternative music. The broader music media environment has changed alongside the music industry shift from physical sales to streaming platforms. This paper discusses research with New Zealand musicians carried out in 2019, which found that they are engaging with a music industry that requires new sets of skills, particularly for social media promotion. Student radio stations are identified as a key site of support for local musicians, for airplay and connections with audiences. However there is always scope for more active forms of support for local and national profile building and touring.

Key words: Student radio, College radio, New Zealand music, musicians

Introduction

As the music industry has undergone significant change in the past two decades (Hunkin 2015; Meier 2019), so has the media through which musicians can access audiences (eg Meier 2019; Verboord & van Noord, 2016). By 2019 a number of established music media had closed down in New Zealand, as elsewhere in the world (Snapes 2020). The longest-running music magazine, *Rip It Up*, established in 1977, closed in 2015 (Stuff 2019a), and the last print magazine, *NZ Musician*, went digital-only in 2017 (RNZ Music 2017). The last free to air music television station closed in 2019 (Stuff 2019b). These changes in media outlets respond to changing audience patterns. Audience research released by government funding agency New Zealand on air (NZOA) in July 2020 finds that music audiences in 2020 listen to streaming music services in greater numbers and for longer periods than physical media (Glasshouse, 16), and streaming services are now "equally influential as radio stations and word of mouth from friends and family in terms of New Zealanders finding new music"

(22). By 2021, online video and streaming video on demand are likely to have bigger audiences than television and radio, while "music streaming may also have overtaken radio listening" (2020, 11). These media changes are reflected in criteria for music funding by NZOA, which include 'online audience' support on streaming services,¹ measured by numbers of streams, monthly audience numbers, and social media followers (2020, 1).

Reviewing NZOA music funding practices Brown (2019) notes that a decline in music media in New Zealand presents significant challenges for funded musicians. Music publicists in his research reported

that the broader media environment makes it increasingly difficult to win coverage, especially for New Music Single [funding] recipients. There are no national music magazines, scant space for music coverage in newspapers and TV and only a handful of specialist music websites. Radio of all kinds, but especially RNZ and student radio, provides publicity opportunities, but stories off the back of a single release can be a hard sell (16).

Of the two forms of media named here, RNZ, formerly Radio New Zealand, is the national public broadcaster, and 'student radio' is the Student Radio Network (SRN), a network of partially-funded limited commercial radio stations. The NZOA music funding criteria also recognises these stations as sites for developing a 'Broadcast track record' on the SRN Top 10 Chart, and live to air performances (2020, 1). This article draws on research undertaken in 2019 with the support of the SRN. It discusses aspects of how musicians navigate media and promotion in New Zealand, and how they perceive the role of student radio in their music practice.

Student radio stations in New Zealand were established by university students' associations between 1969 and 1985. They are all supported by advertising and NZOA funding, and some continue to receive limited support from their original students' associations. The current five student stations are bFM (University of Auckland, established in 1969), Radio Control (Massey University, Palmerston North, 1981), Radio Active (Victoria University, Wellington, 1977), RDU (Canterbury University, Christchurch, 1976), and Radio One (Otago University, Dunedin, 1985). The Waikato University, Hamilton,

¹ Other criteria include 'broadcast track record' and other media support; headlining live performances, touring, and festivals, each with minimum audience and performance numbers; third party industry support including record label, management and publishing; and awards.

station Contact FM closed in 2014. Their ownership structures, including license ownership, have changed, and both individual stations and the collective, have been renamed several times over the decades.² The stations operate on a highly localised level, with some paid staff and large numbers of volunteers, including many university students. While focusing on their local cities and music scenes, they also collaborate as a loose network, which has at times attempted to operate in a more unified way - most notably as the 'bNet' for several years from 1997.

For decades the student stations have played significant levels of local music, identified by NZOA as music "made by New Zealanders, where 'made' means "performed or recorded" and "New Zealander" means "New Zealand citizen or resident" (NZOA, n.d.a) The agency quantifies student radio's support at "between 40% and 50% local music content" (n.d.b), in the loose set of genres considered 'alternative' music, far higher than commercial radio stations' support of more 'mainstream' music genres (Shuker 2008: 278; Norris and Pauling 2011: 188). From 1989 to 2018 NZOA funded the stations specifically for their local music content, recognising student radio's major role in supporting New Zealand music. This funding structure changed in 2018 to 'platform' based funding instead, a non-contestable fund that positions these radio stations alongside RNZ and others, as public media (Meharry 2018). The student stations consider their highly localised and ever-evolving nature a strength for building relationships with their communities of musicians, listeners and volunteers (SRN 2020; Walton 2020). However there is little research to understand this from a musician's perspective.

This paper uses survey and focus group research from 2019 to discuss how musicians navigate and perceive the expectations of the contemporary media and promotion environment. It focuses on student radio as a space that is understood to be supportive of local music, and a pathway to recognition as an artist, to ask whether, and how, alternative

² Radio Active became wholly independently owned in 1989, including ownership of the broadcast license. RDU (previously Radio U and UFM) was sold to private owners in 2006, but the University of Canterbury Students' Association still hold the license. BFM (Previously Radio B) is wholly owned by a subsidiary of the Auckland University Students' Association but owns its own broadcast license. Radio Control (Previously Radio Massey) and Radio One are owned by their students' associations, including the licenses. The financial relationships vary between the stations remaining in Students' association ownership, as a result of the Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Act 2011, which made Student Union / Students' Association membership voluntary and reduced association budgets (Haggart 2011). Contact FM at the University of Waitako closed after a period of private ownership from 1998.

musicians consider their local student stations, and the broader SRN, to be supportive of music made in Aotearoa New Zealand. It argues that as other media and areas of music infrastructure have been eroded, student radio remains important for providing airplay, feedback, promotion, and other forms of support for local music. Musicians can also identify broader possible roles for student radio to support national touring and profile-building.

Music and student radio:

Research on music, music practice, and funding in New Zealand tends to discuss student radio somewhat in passing, in reference to its support for local music (Dubber 2007; Mitchell 1997; Moughan 2015; Shuker 2008; Wilson and Holland 2020), or aspects of commercialism (Reiley and Farnsworth 2015). Canterbury University station RDU has been discussed in some depth by Author (date), and more expansive histories are covered in the television documentary *Radio Punks* (Casserly 2015), RNZ audio series 'A history of Student Radio' (Saw 2015), and a series of articles in *New Zealand Musician* (Thorne 2013). In accounts of NZOA funding that refer to student radio, it tends to be referred to as the broadcast medium that most clearly supports New Zealand music (Dubber 2007: 32; Moughan 2015). However in these, as in other sources cited above, it can be taken for granted in this role - as the stations whose support is assured, but not closely analysed. More detail on student radio is provided by Brown (2019), who observes that it

continues to be a good friend of New Zealand music and independent labels and artists in particular – but the pipeline between student radio play and commercial radio, which spawned the careers of Bic Runga and others, largely no longer exists. Student stations offer vital recognition to new artists and most sustain vibrant communities, but tend to go their own ways in music programming, limiting any national network effect.... Student stations remain a useful stop for publicists, especially when an artist is on tour, as they tend to have strong connections to their local live music scenes (22).

These observations from industry confirm the importance of student radio in supporting local independent artists, and the live music scenes in each city with a student radio station. However the local strength of the stations also reduces their capacity to support local musicians at a more national level, and to provide a bridge for local independent music to be supported by commercial stations.

Student radio's role as a 'friend' of independent labels and artists is supported by autobiographies that offer some insight into the historical relationship between musicians and

radio. Shayne Carter (2019) worked for the Dunedin student radio station, Radio One, and his early band The Doublehappys recorded an EP there in 1985 (172). His book opens with a hazy night at the bNet (student radio) music awards in 2005, receiving a "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Prime Minister (11-13). These events span most of a significant career in the intersection of music and student radio. Roger Shepherd (2016), founder of Flying Nun Records, to which Carter's bands have been signed, emphasises the importance of student radio to the label's development. For example, the label's second single release, 'Tally Ho' by The Clean (1981) was played by "student radio up and down the country," which meant

The band reached their potential core audience right then and built on it over the next year. That groundswell generated demand from retailers around the country and pushed the single into the national top twenty chart at number nineteen (62-3).

Over the years, Shepherd believes "being on Flying Nun was probably a hindrance for a band when it came to commercial radio.... [Commercial] Radio hated us, with the perception being that everything we did was poorly recorded and rather strange" (137). In contrast, the label "always worked closely with the student stations. They were the only radio outlets for most of our releases and their listeners tended to be our bands' core audience" (201). These anecdotes offer some insight into the role of student radio in supporting the early careers of particular musicians, including Bic Runga as identified by Brown, above, and the Flying Nun bands.

Music and college radio:

While little has been written in detail about the relationships between New Zealand student radio stations and their local music scenes, the role of college radio in the US is more extensively documented. The similarities between the two forms of radio means observations of college radio stations' importance in local music scenes are likely to provide insight into student radio in New Zealand. College radio in the US is particularly discussed in relation to the independent, 'indie', music it was closely aligned with in the 1980s and 90s (Waits 2008). Hibbett defines 'indie rock' as "songs too unconventional to receive playtime on anything but low-powered college radio stations and too challenging or subversive for an older or less educated audience" (2005: 58), much like Shepherd's description of Flying Nun bands. This serves as a useful definition for much of the music still supported by student radio in New Zealand. Kruse observes that in the 1980s "Indie music scenes provided recruiting grounds

for the mainstream music industry," due to College radio's proficiency at 'breaking' bands into mainstream success (2010: 625), as Brown notes with the later example of Bic Runga (2019, 22). At a local level, college radio is part of a broad network of musicians, record stores, fans, and labels, that comprise local music scenes, as noted in the subcultural identities around indie pop in Champaign Illinois (Kruse 1993). Moore identifies the importance of "fiercely independent" station KAOS" in the development of Riot Grrl in Olympia, Washington (2007). "College radio formats" are part of the 'durable post punk infrastructure' supporting the indie rock terrain in Stahl's analysis of the community in the Bay Area 'urban rock scene' (2003). Foster and Marshall's discussion of the Lecco's Lemma radio show on college stations in Boston from 1985-88 celebrates the way it "became a magnet for local MCs, DJs, and crews - and, crucially, their tapes - and served as a central node for Boston's emerging hip-hop scene and the community that gathered around it" (2015: 164). In the same era, Harrison observes that "Both college radio and college-campus touring circuits played important roles in supporting and promoting hip hop throughout the 1980s (2016: 138)." These references speak to the ways college and student radio stations can be integral in the music made in "particular geographic sites" (Kruse 1993: 33), central elements for playing and supporting the music made in local scenes.

Method

The research was prompted by conversations with student radio stations about a review by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage into support mechanisms for local music. From that beginning point, this work was developed as a broad survey of New Zealand musicians, supported by more in-depth focus groups, that could be used by the SRN to inform a response to the Ministry (Hall, 2018). The whole research project is more expansive than a focus on student radio, seeking to understand the practices, and challenges, of musicians in New Zealand in 2019. A report on the full findings was submitted to the Ministry for Culture and Heritage in March 2020.

The research was carried out from February to August 2019. It began with a scoping focus group, which established the basis for an online survey using the Qualtrics platform, and two research focus groups. The survey was informed by the issues raised in scoping, and feedback from a range of testers. The resulting 72 questions asked about musician practice, including income sources, performing and touring; promotional activity, including media coverage; community connections; relationships with student radio stations; definitions of

success; and awareness of help and resources.

The survey was promoted by the Student Radio Network stations, on air and through social media channels, and was open for responses from June 19 to August 1, 2019. Respondents needed to identify as a musician and be over the age of 16. In total 418 musicians answered at least some of the questions, as not all were compulsory. This promotional strategy means the survey respondents were most likely to already be connected to the student radio stations, as listeners and as followers of the stations' social media accounts, to hear and see advertisements.

This form of non-probability convenience sampling is common in research with musicians, where a total population is not knowable beyond membership of specific organisations, and as DiCola observes in the US, "No single organization owns a mailing list that includes all musicians in all genres" (2013, 314). The responses in this survey are smaller than larger funded surveys that have purchased advertising and actively solicited participation from a range of musician organisations (eg Colmar Brunton 2019, 1477 respondents; DiCola 2013, 6769 respondents; New Zealand Music Foundation 2016, 1352 respondents). However focusing on musicians who will actively respond to a call by student radio stations for participation creates a self-selecting sample that is well-positioned to consider the role of these radio stations in music practice.

Because the survey was predominantly completed by male pākehā (European New Zealanders) musicians, two focus groups were conducted in Christchurch in July 2019 to ensure a wider range of perspectives could be gathered. One group was of female musicians, and one of māori musicians. These were carried out in the city in which the researchers were located. They addressed the same issues as the survey, but enabled a more in-depth exploration of the particular experiences and needs of musicians who are not clearly represented in the survey. These were semi-structured, following a question guide that reflected the overall framework of the survey. The focus group of women was facilitated by a female postgraduate student, and the group of māori musicians was facilitated by a māori musician colleague.

Respondents:

Of the 418 musicians who completed the survey, the majority were male (74%), Pākehā

(75%), and between 18 and 44 years old (74%).³ Respondents were given a list of possible genres, reflecting categories used by the student radio stations, which they could interpret in their own way. Respondents were able to choose as many genres as they felt were relevant, reflecting the exploratory nature of their practice, and the predominant genres were fairly evenly split between electronic, rock, and 'indie'. Length of time in the industry reflected a very established group of respondent musicians, with 63% of respondents having been "involved in music" for ten years or more.

Table 1: Genres of music played by survey respondents

The focus group participants have had many different roles in the local music scene. Four women participated in the first group, from a range of electronic and indie music practices and genres. In the māori group there were five participants, four male and one female, who whakapapa to Ngāi Tahu, Waitaha, and several North Island iwi, including a facilitator who also plays drums in several indie rock bands. The māori participants are vocalists and musicians in a range of hip hop, dub, roots, and reggae groups, while one is also a producer and record label owner.

Results:

Musicians' relationships with student radio stations happens in the context of a broader media environment, which has shrunk significantly, as discussed above. However the criteria for NZOA music funding identified in the introduction require media support and promotion both as benchmarks in themselves, and as necessary to achieve other benchmarks (2020). The following section summarises research findings about music practice, media coverage, and promotion, and is followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings for student radio drawn from the survey and a more in-depth discussion in the focus groups.

Music income and releases:

Income received over the previous 12 months reflected a complex combination of sources. When asked to rank those sources, performing appears as the greatest source of income with online sales second, and rights agency APRA third overall. Notably both online sales (second) and streaming (fourth) just outranked physical media sales

³ Full demographic tables are listed in the appendix.

in NZ (fifth), see Table 2. Text responses highlight the overall low level of income respondents receive from performing live when taking into account the work involved. In the previous 12 months, of 303 respondents, 68% had released music, most commonly on 'Bandcamp or similar' (26% of releases).

Table 2: Income sources

Media coverage and promotion

A survey of media coverage provides context for the role of student radio in particular, addressing the extent of coverage respondents have received on radio, television, and in print and online sources. Social media promotion has become more important as other media sources have declined, and this section also asks how respondents manage the work involved in maintaining a social media profile.

Radio was the medium that accorded the most coverage, as 67% of respondents had had music played on radio in the previous 12 months. Student radio stations were the biggest media outlet for these musicians, with just over 50% of radio airplay being on a student radio station. Stations supported by public funding through New Zealand on Air provided 70.4% of the radio airplay, on Student Radio, Access Radio, and Radio New Zealand stations.

Table 3: Radio station coverage

The medium least likely to have provided coverage of local music is broadcast television, on which only 5.9% of respondents had received any air play in the previous 12 months, on a range of local and international channels

Only 33.9% of respondents had received print media coverage, but 62.0% had received online media coverage. 68 respondents identified a specific print media outlet in which they had received coverage, and for 42 of them this included local and regional newspapers. In contrast, 128 respondents identified at least one space of online coverage. The two major online outlets, *Under the Radar* and *music.net.nz*, were cited by more respondents than any of the print media, reflecting the breakdown of remaining media identified by Brown (2019)

On social media, a majority of respondents manage their promotion themselves, followed by a bandmate, and venue owners. The most commonly used platform is Facebook (96%), followed by Instagram (66%), and Twitter (22.7%). Of promotion media, social media and posters are the two respondents are most likely to pay for, while few respondents had not used social media for promotion, as detailed in table 4.

Table 4: Use of different promotional media

The survey also asked how respondents feel about their ability to 'keep up' with social media promotion, offering options relating to how much social media the respondents 'want' to do. 49% of respondents identified that they either feel unable to do the promotion they want, or they do some of the promotion they want, while 43.5% feel like they do most or all of the promotion they want. In cross tabulating between whether people feel as though they can keep up with promotion, and how they feel about doing it, there is a very clear relationship between enjoying it and doing most or all of the promotion respondents want, as detailed in table 4.

Table 5: Feelings about ability to keep up with promotion by feelings about doing promotion

The section ended with an open text invitation to add "any other thoughts about promotion". 35 respondents added comments here, which expanded on the challenges of social media promotion, the reduction of other media outlets, and general reflection on the value and difficulty of balancing promotion and creation of music.

That social media has an emotional and creative cost was a common theme, for example:

"Paradoxically it's become harder to find and maintain your audience since the arrival of social media. The number of channels you need to cover has exploded, and it all takes you away from the core task of creating music. Without a decent budget or a willing team of supporters, it's all but impossible for a small outfit to get any momentum going"

"Social media advertising moves quickly - and it is hard to keep up and do it effectively. Advertising is expensive - and often unaffordable. There is no watchdog for music industry services - how do we know the people we pay will do a good job?"

One respondent highlighted a paradox of promotion in a somewhat competitive environment:

"The biggest difficulty with promotion is the first group of people you have access to promote your music to is other musicians and they are trying to promote too so everyone is trying to promote to people who are more focused on their own music"

Social media promotion adds a complex new layer to music practice. As illustrated in table 5, it is not surprising that people who enjoy doing it will feel more able to keep up with social media promotion, but the people in this study who don't enjoy it are likely to experience as a burden that detracts from their practice.

More detail about the difficulty of social media promotion emerged in the focus group of female musicians, who observed that to "be active on your socials" requires money to increase visibility, and ideally pay for PR representation. Even then it's "hit and miss", as one participant described,

It's haaard. I mean I do that as a job as well, I've always done it. I understand the importance of it, but, it's expensive. There are a lot of barriers. People don't know how to do it and connect with audiences. And then you do all this advertising sometimes, and no one turns up, and so you get disheartened.

Between musicians, participants described expectations of a "tit for tat" sharing of events and links, which adds another layer of complexity in the social relations and support networks of musicians and friends.

Student Radio

As noted above, student radio was the medium most likely to provide coverage for these musicians. This section summarises the extent of coverage survey respondents have received on student radio stations. It also includes more detail about how they feel about the relevance of student radio for their practice, and suggestions for how this could be strengthened. It is perhaps unsurprising that a significant majority of respondents have ever had music played on a student radio station (75%). A majority has also been interviewed by a student radio station (58%). Even more respondents feel that student radio stations are relevant for them and their music (83%), while 62% feel supported by them.

Two open-entry text questions created space for respondents to reflect on how the role of student radio could be improved. They asked 'Is there anything you think your local student radio station could do to help you develop as a musician?', and 'Is there anything you think the Student Radio Network (all of the stations together) could do to help you develop as a musician?' 153 people answered each of these.

Rather than suggestions for doing more, 84 responses expressed appreciation for the support of student radio. These ranged from statements like "they're awesome", to more detailed answers, such as:

"I've been supported really well in my "career" by both RDU and bFM, they've made it easy to have my music played and have been incredibly helpful in helping promote when we've had things to promote and talk about. I don't think there's anything else they can do. Live to airs. On air interviews. Playing the music. I've had help with all of these."

"Radio Control is awesome. They play my music, and they've had my band play in the student lounge, recorded it and live-streamed it. That was so helpful with promotion."

"I think there is currently a good balance between the work I have to do to benefit myself as a musician, and the support I get from student radio."

"Student radio and RNZ are the only stations that have played my music. It is crucial to emerging and experimental musicians in Aotearoa."

A range of responses was critical of the student radio stations. These included issues such as: Costs for promoting local music in advertising, and charging for gig guide listings; A recurring critique is that it can be difficult to get responses to emails and to song submissions. These respondents didn't specify any particular station in this respect; 6 responses were variations of 'play my music'.

There were some very detailed suggestions about ways the student radio network as a whole could support local musicians more effectively, with 28 responses that discussed how the stations could be more connected and support musicians across the network. These included a number of calls for student radio stations to support local acts by providing more opportunities to play live to air and at events. For the network as a whole these often focused on support for touring musicians around the country, such as "A tour of swapping local artists between radio stations;" "A Student Radio Network festival...or tour of the top bands in the area...touring each city i.e. Top 3 bands from Palmy playing ChCh, while top 3 bands from ChCh playing Palmy... rotating each city;" creating "local & international databases of venues/promoters/agents etc;" "More collaboration with touring networks;" and "Spread the word about local gigs and help promote shows and local bands especially when they're putting effort in to do local gigs."

Other respondents focused on airplay for songs, such as getting "Access to stats of what top

ten tracks are being played the most where? Would be helpful to know for touring if there is a town cranking your tunes a lot;" "Maybe a good idea, would be the programmers can share the songs they like locally with the other stations to be playlisted all over the country. A lot of musicians (myself included) didn't know that it was a network;" and

It'd be great if there was a super-A rotate list you could get on that guaranteed play across the country. Each station could chose one act from their town each week. Some connection like that would be great, since reaching out to each station directly can be difficult (you end up playlisted on two, but not the others etc).

Another form of coordination suggested came from a respondent who was

reflecting on these questions about people needing help with organising gigs, mental health, etc. I wonder if the radio station can assist there? Organising workshops, promoting support services, etc? Also wondering how there can be more connection between venues, bands and radio?

Overall, another respondent observed, "If the Student Radio Network worked together they would get more artists more reach."

Focus Groups

The two focus groups created opportunity for more in-depth discussion of the role of the Christchurch student radio station RDU in providing space for community-building and connection. Extending from the survey, this provides detail of more specific ways in which a student radio station is experienced as supportive of local musicians. Several of the focus group participants have been directly involved in working and broadcasting on RDU. Two had been employed by the station, and several had hosted or participated in radio shows.

In the group of female musicians a major theme was the challenges of maintaining a presence in a male dominated music scene. One participant who had worked at RDU observed that it takes a constant effort to maintain support for female musicians and a female presence on air. However one particularly active musician is part of an all-female crew that hosts a weekly hip hop show on the station, and spoke about the value of that environment for supporting women. A particular challenge for women participating in the music scene identified throughout the female focus group is the difficulty of participating when also carrying out the majority of childcare. The hip hop radio show has also provided a way to

maintain a form of participation within the family:

I've been missing out on hosting up here [at the radio station], because of trying to juggle the kids with babysitters, and blah blah blah. So last Wednesday I just brought the kids up, and they hung out in the studio. They were talking to people on the live feed, and my son's best friend at school is a 9 year old rapper, and he just recorded a track the week before through another artist that we know who had featured up here too, and he was on the live, and I said to him oy what's your little nephew's song, and then we played it off you tube, and he shouts out to my son, who was in the studio

In a performance environment where it is difficult, as the participant put it, to combine "life and music with our families" this offers one example of how the radio station can provide space to do just this.

In the māori group a major focus was the relative lack of support for roots and reggae music in the broader New Zealand music industry. Here student radio has been an important space for developing musicians and performers. One participant in particular, who runs Reality Chant, a label focused on conscious roots-reggae, identified RDU as the space where his "musical journey began," connecting him to a bigger community of like-minded music fans, and forging significant collaborations that launched his live music and production career. Student radio remains the primary place where the music produced by these participants will be played. As the above participant observes:

We all get played here. National Radio [RNZ National] every now and then plays Reality Chant, which is cool. But it's mostly just student radio. I get much more radio play overseas.... our last tune got played in something like eighty different countries, [...] I would consider that a pretty large international reach, that was bigger than anything I've produced has had. But locally: three radio stations. A couple of iwi [locally run māori] stations, RDU, Radio Active, and Palmerston North student radio. So, way more in Australia – Australia played it way more than kiwi stations. And this is a Māori artist, vocalist, and then myself producing it.

These anecdotes from the focus groups identify particular functions of student radio in supporting local music in Aotearoa New Zealand. In these examples RDU has provided space for participants to develop as musicians, to support others through hosting radio shows, and to build and connect with community. The student radio stations remain the place where all of these musicians are most likely to receive airplay.

Discussion

In a survey distributed and promoted by the Student Radio Network, it is not surprising that the respondents have indicated a high level of airplay and support from the student stations. However, this support is in the context of the decline in overall music media, as noted by Brown, quoted earlier, that now "There are no national music magazines, scant space for music coverage in newspapers and TV and only a handful of specialist music websites " (2019, 16). As one respondent observed in an open text comment, it is a "real shame that the Press in [Christchurch] no longer do their Friday Music section. (hence I cancelled my subscription)."

This broader context and the role of social media was noted by several respondents in open text observations about media and promotion, such as "There are no magazines dedicated to NZ Music, which is limiting, so social media has to fill the gap." As discussed in survey and focus group responses, promotional work is often experienced as a burden in by these participants, with the sense that it is additional labour for musicians. As participants in the women's focus group observed, effective social media promotion can be expensive, and the survey showed it to be the form of promotion most likely to be paid for. However there is also complicated etiquette of reciprocal online support for event listings that is not always observed, and audiences remain as variable as ever. A sense of the cost to music practice is illustrated in this survey comment:

Social media is effective but absolutely robs you of your mental and emotional bandwidth. It used to be that you sorted your print promotion ages in advance (given the turnout deadlines etc) and then all you had to do was then develop your show. I find I am sitting on my computer all the time having to be instantly available – it's not a headspace I can manage if I'm trying to be creative.

Social media platforms enable musicians to expand their audience reach geographically beyond the local, and beyond the scope of even national-level media (Kruse 2010), particularly when combined with streaming on global platforms, and selling on spaces such as Bandcamp, widely used by the participants in this research. However there is still a risk of being lost in the noise (Connell & Gibson in Kruse 2010, 635), as the global streaming environment makes it more difficult for musicians from small places to be noticed (Brown 2019, Meier 2019; Verboord and van Noord, 2016).

At a local level, within the scenes of their individual cities, student radio stations have a long history of support for alternative music in New Zealand (Carter 2019; Casserly 2015;

Shepherd 2016; Saw 2015), as has college radio in different geographical and genre-based scenes in the US. For the musicians who responded to this research, student radio stations are still perceived as relevant for their music, and for most, supportive. A majority of respondents have had music played on student radio stations and many have been interviewed by a student radio station. As several open text respondents, and focus group participants, observe, it is the most reliable space of radio airplay for them in New Zealand. The focus group participants offer additional specific examples of how a student radio station can facilitate community-building and connections, while providing space to include family in radio and music practice.

A clear issue for the musicians is how to reach beyond a local station to a more national audience, for example to develop and support touring. The forms of success identified by participants, such as gaining recognition and income from touring, require more than airplay by local student radio stations, and likely more than funding to record and promote a song. Here the suggestions made for increasing cooperation between the student radio stations to increase connections between musicians and national audiences may be particularly productive. Audience moves away from broadcast radio to music streaming services (Glasshouse 2020) have not been measured for impact on student radio audiences. For alternative musicians in New Zealand, it is evident that student radio is still experienced as a "good friend of New Zealand music" (Brown 2019), but in an increasingly complex environment.

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Appendix: Demographic data

1. Gender

Gender	Percent
Male	73.6%
Female	21.0%
Non-binary	2.2%
Would rather not answer	3.3%

2. Ethnicity

Ethnicity (multiple selection)	Percent
Pākehā / NZ European	75.0%
Māori	8.8%
Other European	4.9%
Would rather not answer	4.9%
Other	4.2%
Pasifika	2.3%

3. Age Range

Age range	Percent
16-17	1.1%
18-24	18.2%
25-34	33.8%
35-44	22.2%
45-54	14.5%
55-64	8.4%
65-74	1.5%
75 or older	0.4%

4. Length of time in music

Length of time in music	Percent
Less than 1 year	1.5%
At least 1 year but less than 3 years	3.8%
At least 3 years but less than 5 years	7.4%
At least 5 years but less than 10 years	19.0%
10 years or more	68.2%

Tables

Table 1: Genres of music played by survey respondents

Genre	%
Electronic genres*	16.54
Rock	14.77
Indie	14.55
Other	9.48
Pop	6.39
Experimental	6.28
Funk - Soul	4.41
Improvised	4.30
Jazz	3.53
Hip Hop	3.42
Folk	2.87
Metal	2.76
Noise	2.54
Alternative country	2.32
Dub - Reggae	2.32
Downbeat - Instrumental	2.21
Country	1.32
	100%

[*] 'Electronic' genres identified were: Drum n Bass, House, Breaks, Dubstep, Two Step, Glitch Hop, Grime, Indie electronic, Trap, Electronica, Future Bass

Table 2: Income sources

Money	% > 1%
Performing	24.4
Sales of music - online	13.7
APRA	11.2
Sales of music - physical objects (records/CDs/tapes) in New Zealand	8.4
Streaming service:	8.4
Royalties for use of your music in New Zealand	8
Sales of other merchandise in New Zealand	6.6
Sales of music - physical objects (records/CDs/tapes) overseas	4.5
Paid employment in non-performing role	4.2
Royalties for use of your music overseas	3.7
Sales of other merchandise overseas	2.9
NZ on Air	1.5

Table 3: Radio station coverage

Radio Station	%
The Student Radio Station closest to you	28.5
Any other Student Radio Station	21.7
On RNZ National	11.5
An online only station based in NZ	10.4
An access radio station	7.4
An international station:	7.4
A Low Power FM station	6.0
A commercial radio station	5.0
On RNZ concert	1.3
An Iwi station	0.9

All student radio: 50.2%

All publicly supported radio: 70.4%

Table 4: Use of different promotional media

Promotion media	Paid	Unpaid	No	
Social Media	27.5	61.1	11.4	100%
Posters	27.5	38.2	34.4	100%
Online (not social media) advertising	13.6	4.8	81.7	100%
Flyers	12.8	21.4	65.7	100%
Radio	9.8	45.9	44.4	100%
Print media advertising	7.1	9.4	83.5	100%
Email list	4.3	29.3	66.4	100%
Television advertising	0.4	2.0	97.6	100%

Table 5: Feelings about ability to keep up with promotion by feelings about doing promotion

	I enjoy it	I don't like doing it but I do it because I know I have to	I don't like doing it and so I don't do it	I don't mind it
I feel like I do all the promotion I want	32.2%	14.8%	0.0%	24.2%
I feel like I do most of the promotion I want	42.4%	20.3%	0.0%	22.7%
I feel like I some of the promotion I want	15.3%	32.8%	12.0%	24.2%
I feel like I am unable to do the promotion I want	10.2%	30.5%	44.0%	18.2%
I deliberately choose not to do any promotion	0.0%	1.6%	44.0%	10.6%
	100%	100%	100%	100%