33¹⁄₃

WCPE’s First Third of a Century
WCPE Radio has become a national resource for Great Classical Music, and our online listenership continues to grow despite my long-ago questioning—"Who is going to want to listen to radio over the Internet?" But now, people listen to us by streaming from theclassicalstation.org from locations all over the world, like Paris, France; Pretoria, South Africa; and Wuhan, China.

Work on the station began in the mid-1970s. Because we had few funds, we built almost everything—audio board, level controllers, stereo generator, microwave (yes, our own TX-RX hop, with CP antennas), and even our own 12,500-watt transmitter and seven-bay antenna. All this work took more than three years. Back then, most professionals thought creating this station was impossible, except two I hold in esteem: Wade Hargrove and Jim Goodmon, both broadcasting legends today. Looking back, I honestly don’t know how we did it—it was against all odds.

However, every step of the way, something was there to help us. Solutions to technical problems and items needed for success appeared when we needed them.

Did you know that WCPE ushered in the BBC to the United States? We were the first station to carry the BBC World News in the U.S., receiving it by shortwave. When this formerly free service to our partner stations became a paid service, the loss to us and our partner stations was even discussed in the House of Commons.

One memorable event occurred that made me keep listeners in the forefront of my mind. Very late one night at 2:00 a.m., I had the choice of doing some transmitter work that would have taken five minutes if I shut the transmitter down or an hour if I left it running. I thought, “Someone is listening,” so I chose the hour-long work-around. Two days later, a letter arrived thanking us for playing, at that exact time, a dying man’s favorite work in his last hours. At that moment I knew why it had seemed important to stay on the air.

Another thing I hadn’t expected was that members would be so generous in remembering WCPE in their wills. We will always appreciate their generosity and intention to help us bring Great Classical Music to the next generation of listeners.

We count on your support, our generous listeners. Thank you for helping us keep the transmitter running all those years ago and continuing to support us all these years in the future. As we turn a new page, we always remember that you are listening.
**In Memoriam**

WCPE honors the memory of departed friends whose contributions to this station are immeasurable. We are humbled by their passion, devotion, and years of service.

Jack Barr
Warren Bird
Richard Campbell
Frank Casey

Frosty Clark
Paul Kosht
Ed McLean
Andrea Rosnick

Al Ruocchio
Elmo Scoggin

**Gallery of Hosts**

Kathryn Atkinson
Jon Bailey
David Ballantyne
Kenneth Bradshaw

Dave Bryant
Phil Davis Campbell
Bob Chapman
Warner Hall

Andy Huber
Paul Jordan
Rob Kennedy
Joyce Kidd

Brian LeBlanc
Tara Lynn
Juergen Rathgeber
Dick Storck

Sherman Wallace
Will Woltz
WCPE Takes to the Air:

A Towering Achievement

By David Ballantyne

If you have been listening to WCPE this summer, you have probably heard us mention that our first transmission took place on July 18, 1978. Before that date, however, we had a lot of groundwork to do. We had to find a place to use as a studio and—not least—build our own tower.

Obviously, a radio tower needs to be as high up as possible, so we had to find a suitably tall building. The three tallest buildings in the Raleigh area in 1976 were the NCSU Library tower, the Holiday Inn on Hillsborough Street, and Capital Towers on Six Forks Road. We got permission to build our transmitter and tower on top of the Capital Towers building, paying rent and electricity. For our young team of students from N.C. State University, building the radio station from scratch wasn’t just a challenge, it was a necessity. There was very little in the way of funds, and those rent and electricity payments came out of the pockets of the founding members.

There was one stipulation: no new construction could actually touch the surface of the roof, so we built a metal frame made from I-beams suspended between the concrete pillars that supported the building’s exhaust fans. It just so happened that the 12-foot span was perfect for supporting the tower and the 12-foot-by-20-foot area was big enough to house the transmitter.

The Capital Towers building was 120 feet tall, and the height of the tower was 60 feet, built from six 10-foot sections. Jim Sempstrott, who transported the 10-foot sections by vintage Pontiac, remembers that the sections were too long to fit in the building’s elevator, so each one had to be carried up twelve flights of stairs to the roof!

Jim recalls: “Erecting the tower was fairly easy. The hardest part was drilling the six holes through an eight-inch concrete wall to install the anchoring plates which held the tower guy wires. This was a long, loud, and laborious process which the residents of the twelfth floor had to suffer through.”

Meantime, studio equipment was being built so that the music, the announcer’s voice, and other audio signals could be smoothly relayed to the transmitter. Once the tower and the all-important guy wires were in place, the signal from the original studio in a small house on Old Wake Forest Road could be transmitted and the extensive period of testing could begin. For weeks, only test tones were transmitted until all of the imponderables had been ironed out and all the equipment tested to professional standard. Finally, on July 18, 1978, WCPE began broadcasting.

The first piece of Classical music played was Symphony no. 3 by Camille Saint-Saëns, the first of many 33 1/3 rpm records played until CDs were used exclusively in the late 1990s.

Back in the Day

A WCPE Retrospective

By Christina Romano

WCPE believes that Classical music is an integral part of the quality of life in our communities and around the world. Accordingly, WCPE’s mission is to make Great Classical Music available at all times to people everywhere. We began operating in July of 1978, and at first, we only broadcast during afternoon and evening hours. In 1982, our goal became to deliver the finest Classical-music programming and the highest quality broadcast signal around the clock.

As Dick Storck says, WCPE was “born” in the analog audio era. WCPE played Classical music from vinyl 33 1/3 rpm LP records prior to October 1982, because compact discs and CD players were not available. At that time, the studio was in an old house. Storck says, “The turntables were mounted through the floor on pedestals directly affixed to the ground below to prevent rumble and footstep noise when people walked on the wooden floors.Scratches, clicks, and pops were the results of physical wear and damage to the delicate grooves on the LP.” He says, “Pre-produced programs and announcements were recorded and edited on analog quarter-inch reel-to-reel tape. All on-air sound was controlled by the studio audio console, built by station manager Deborah Proctor.”

In the early days, it was a challenge to bring in funds to help keep WCPE on the air. John Taffee, who joined WCPE’s staff in 1986 after volunteering for several years, remembers trips to the Federal Surplus Property Agency hunting for bargains and holding yard sales at our former location on Old Wake Forest Road with donated items. In those days, John helped put together the program guide—literally. He performed layout on a light table, printed on actual photographic plates, and assembled the finished product with the help of about 20 volunteers.

Many listeners will remember hearing the BBC News on WCPE. Joe Purcell recalls, “In 1987, when I started on the air, we used the BBC news at the top of the hour several times throughout the day. We used several short-wave radios to capture the BBC, and we carefully dialed in from the 4 or 5 frequencies available. This had to be done just seconds before going on the air to announce the BBC news, and to our frustration, often during the broadcast the signal would drift in and out, many times to the point that we would have to interrupt the transmission.”

Twenty years later, state-of-the-art studio and transmitter equipment, including our digital satellite uplink and Internet streaming in multiple formats, ensure that WCPE consistently provides the highest quality stereo signal for our listeners. We’ve come a long way in the last third of a century, and we hope you’ll join us in the next!
WCPE vs. the FCC

By Brian LeBlanc

When WCPE went on the air in July of 1978, it broadcast with 12,500 watts of power. Four years later, the station received permission from the Federal Communications Commission to increase power to 33,000 watts, further extending the listening area.

The next logical step was an increase in power to 100,000 watts, the maximum permitted by law that would allow WCPE to serve the entire Triangle area. WCPE’s path to boosting its power was seven years long, but the results were worth the wait. Eventually, the FCC changed its own rules in response to WCPE’s petition.

At issue was a provision in the FCC rules that held non-commercial stations like WCPE to a different standard than commercial stations. That provision had been changed upon request from commercial broadcasters, who argued that the 1950 technical standards were far too strict. The FCC agreed, changing the rules to permit much more extensive power increases. But until WCPE made the argument that non-commercial stations should not be held to a different standard simply because of their location on the FM dial, all non-commercial stations remained subject to the old rule. The non-commercial provision was 100 times stricter than the one for commercial stations and reflected a regulatory difference between commercial and non-commercial FM signals. Based on the old provision, the FCC ruled in 1989 that WCPE would not be allowed to increase its power.

WCPE appealed the FCC’s decision to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and argued that the difference in the commission’s treatment of commercial and non-commercial stations unfairly prevented non-commercial stations from increasing their broadcasting power. WCPE argued that the rules should be the same for all FM broadcasting, since there was no difference between a commercial and a non-commercial signal. While that appeal was pending, Rep. David Price offered a rider to legislation in Congress to derail funding for the FCC until WCPE’s argument was discussed further.

In 1991, the FCC agreed with WCPE. In what has become known as the “Raleigh Rule,” the commission said that while the original denial of the power increase was not faulty, given the precedent in place at the time, the rules used to justify the denial were indeed incorrect. The FCC changed its rules to allow WCPE’s power increase to proceed. Power increases for non-commercial stations would be held to the same standard as those of commercial stations, a victory for WCPE after seven years of hard work to get the rule changed.

Thanks to WCPE’s efforts, non-commercial stations across the country are now able to increase their broadcasting power to better serve the public. Many stations in the 20 years since the “Raleigh Rule” have cited WCPE’s persistence in allowing them to serve their own listeners.

The Raleigh Rule would not be reality without the help of the late Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC), Rep. David Price (D-NC), and Raleigh lawyers Mark J. Prak, Wade Hargrove, and David Kushner. Because of it, WCPE is able to broadcast Great Classical Music at full power across central North Carolina!
Changes in Broadcast Technology

By Brian LeBlanc

When WCPE first went on the air in 1978, it took a 20-mule wagon team to perform the labor in the snow, uphill both ways, tirelessly working 25 hours a day—OK, maybe it wasn’t quite like that. But in the last 33-plus years, technology has changed at WCPE so much that it now takes only a simple click of a mouse to send Great Classical Music around the world.

If you had told that to WCPE announcers in the early days, they would have been puzzled. Back then, CDs didn’t exist, personal computers were a pipe dream, and radio stations everywhere had two main methods with which to broadcast. One was vinyl. The first piece of Classical music ever played on WCPE, the Organ Symphony by Saint-Saëns, was played on a 12-inch LP, and to this day WCPE has bookshelves full of records that were played on the air until well into the 1980s. The other method was something known in the radio business as a cart machine. A cart (short for cartridge) was a plastic, rectangular piece of equipment about the size of a box of flash cards; if you remember what 8-tracks looked like, they were based on the same technology. Most pre-recorded announcements were played from carts well into the 1990s. Our general manager, Deborah Proctor, built a cart machine by hand that remains functional even today!

With the rise of digital broadcast technology in the late 1980s, WCPE began moving away from vinyl and toward compact discs. We now have over 9,000 CDs in our music library, with more coming in all the time thanks to donations from WCPE members. CD players made things easier for announcers; instead of having to cue up a record, the announcer simply has to program a CD player to play specific tracks.

Carts were replaced in the late 1990s by a technology known as MiniDiscs, square cartridges roughly the size of 3.5-inch floppy disks. They remain in service for backup purposes today.

Computers came to the WCPE studio in the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, as the station migrated from using CDs and MiniDiscs to playing all music and announcements on computer systems. Some of the older CDs in our library were wearing out after nearly 20 years of use, so to preserve these great performances we upgraded to a computer retrieval system. Now, one mouse click will start an entire Beethoven symphony with no additional effort, and we no longer have to worry about a CD being stepped on or scratched.

Hard to imagine Mozart or Brahms trying to figure out CDs, isn’t it? WCPE is at the forefront of broadcast technology to ensure that the Great Classical Music you love will always be available, no matter what the next big thing to come down the technology track might be!

How We Listen Now

By the WCPE Web Team

There was a time when FM and AM were your only choices for radio listening, and if you travelled just a few minutes, you would exceed the footprint, and the signal would fade. No longer.

The Internet itself has created an astounding leveling effect in radio—anyone, anywhere can listen to almost anyone else with a web presence. If you look at our world wall map at the station, you find pushpins representing locations of listeners in every continent, in every time zone, in virtually every country. This coverage is an awe-inspiring responsibility for us, but the WCPE team is up to the challenge; this brilliant music deserves no less.

Modern listeners are portable and networked, carrying devices that are integral to their everyday lives. To that end, WCPE’s team continues in the process of improving our Internet streams and creating an application presence that allows our listeners to listen wherever they are. Windows and Mac users can connect to our live stream either by using the Radio function in iTunes (in the Classical genre) or by going to our web page and clicking “Listen Now.” Mobile users can find WCPE by searching in the free Public Radio Player app.

WCPE also works with partner radio stations and cable systems across the United States to spread Great Classical Music to everyone, everywhere. We have made so many great friends through our partnerships, and since WCPE’s music is offered free of charge or obligation, any station or system can join the family!

Since WCPE has a live person on the air 24 hours a day, we can be reached at all times for assistance.

WCPE is a progenitor and leader in bringing forth Great Classical Music. As we move further into the 21st century, WCPE will continue to provide for our loyal listeners and build our audience worldwide.

You see things; and you say, “Why?” But I dream things that never were; and I say, “Why not?” (G.B. Shaw)
Modern Classical music is fairly new as a regular programming feature of WCPE. In its first third of a century, composers from the mid-twentieth century forward were rarely, if ever, heard. However, all that changed in the spring of 2010 when general manager Deborah Proctor gave the green light to begin a one-hour program each week on Sunday at 9:00 p.m. ET.

The program Wavelengths had its first broadcast on September 5, 2010, and featured composers from North Carolina during its first month, broadening out across the United States during October and November. Beginning in December, composers from around the world were heard. The audience response was overwhelmingly positive, a response which also included financial support because of the program.

Preview, hosted by Paul Jordan each Sunday evening from 6:00 until 9:00 p.m. ET, features new Classical releases from all eras of the Classical spectrum. It generally eschewed new releases that dealt with modern Classical music until late 2010. Now, the compositions of living composers are regularly heard as well. Preview and Wavelengths complement each other, sharing research and recent discoveries.

As WCPE looks forward, many of those “new” composers have already seamlessly made their way into WCPE’s regular rotation. Our music library has grown to include composers from every race, color, and creed, adding depth and breadth to our collection—and bringing excitement to what music may yet lie in front of us!

By Kenneth Bradshaw

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By William Woltz

Being music director at WCPE is a little like playing the Roman god Janus. Every day I’m looking back to past centuries when much of our Great Classical Music was written. Yet I’m constantly looking forward, too, keeping an eye on the newest digital technologies, always looking for better ways of sharing this beautiful music with listeners everywhere.

Obviously, much has changed since WCPE first went on the air in 1978. Back then we played the music on long-playing vinyl records. Eventually LPs gave way to compact discs, and now the oldest CDs in our library are wearing out. (It turns out they don’t last forever, after all.) So we’re working to transfer the music from our CD collection to computer hard drives for storage and playback. We hope to preserve these precious recordings indefinitely and to play them without the annoyance of skipping CDs. This effort also helps us adapt to changes in the music industry. Record labels, faced with cutting costs like the rest of us, are increasingly reluctant to mail out promotional copies of new CDs. Many recordings are now available to radio stations only as digital downloads. Our hard-drive playback system enables us to work with these new realities.

The intersection of music and technology is nothing new. Consider Beethoven. An enthusiastic supporter of the new-fangled piano, he tested new models for various builders and offered suggestions that helped lead to the instrument we know today. Then there’s Debussy, whose new musical directions were driven in part by his rapidly changing world. “The century of aeroplanes deserves its own music,” he said. And Aaron Copland’s choice to write music for the common man was influenced by the popularity of the phonograph record, an innovation that brought music to the masses in ways that earlier composers could not have imagined.

When WCPE first began streaming on the Internet in 1998, some were skeptical. Who would listen to Classical music through his computer? A lot of you, apparently. A few years later, I was the skeptical one. Would anyone really listen through his cell phone? Again, the answer is proving to be yes.

So what’s the next big innovation? I wish I knew. It will likely be a bit unexpected, as smart phones were. But rest assured, if it helps us to do a better job delivering the music, we’ll take notice.

Yet with all this emphasis on what’s new, we can’t lose sight of what’s timeless. We are working to broaden our presentation of the Classical masterpieces. Several generous CD donations have helped us to fill gaps in our collection from throughout the era of stereo recording (more than 60 years now!). We are also working to bring you the best of the exciting new crop of young Classical performers, the ones who will keep this music vital for the next generation.

At WCPE, we intend to employ whatever technology it takes to bring you the best listening experience, while remaining faithful to the music of the masters. Our listeners don’t deserve any less.

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WCPE in the Community

By Tara Lynn

Community spirit has always been an important factor in The Classical Station’s success. Here are just a few ways WCPE connects to and invests in our community today.

Education Fund. The gift of understanding how to listen to and how to make music is one that allows us to feel connected to the larger picture despite our unique paths in life. While many of us grew up with music in our schools, children today don’t have the same level of exposure to Classical music and the folk traditions that inspired them. For this reason, we have decided to help nonprofit organizations who provide Classical music education within the community. In our short history, we have worked with the North Carolina Symphony, KidzNotes, Friends of the Brussels Chamber Orchestra, and the Eastern Music Festival to create meaningful experiences for young music lovers.

Local Arts Series in Collaboration in Quail Ridge Books & Music. 2011 has been a year of discovery, partnership, and great music. WCPE partners with Quail Ridge Books & Music in Raleigh to offer a free monthly event. Each month a Classical music ensemble has provided a unique hour-long presentation teaching the community about its mission and performing excerpts from an upcoming ticketed event. Audiences have grown steadily each month for these top-notch events. We have truly appreciated the opportunity to build relationships “on the other side of the microphone” with music makers and music lovers! We plan to continue our active participation in live local events, with Quail Ridge Books & Music and with new partners in the coming years.

Social Networking. Because our listeners near and far are just as dear, we have worked diligently to improve our electronic communication over the years. Right now, our staff actively uses Facebook and Twitter to share information about the music we play, news about what is happening at the station, reminders about local events, and musical news items of national interest. The ability to post videos, interviews, stories, and questions about music on social networking sites allows WCPE announcers to provide their insights about how to approach a piece of music. It allows staff to request listener input about programming and respond to concerns in real time, even when we’re in the studio. WCPE aims to remain a valuable resource in the twenty-first century and an institution that understands Classical music lovers. While we strive to talk less and play more music, Facebook and Twitter provide a space to celebrate our shared love of Great Classical Music.

Tell a friend about WCPE: remember, a good old-fashioned word-of-mouth recommendation goes a long way!

Volunteerism at WCPE

By Jane O’Connor

Volunteers are valued members of the WCPE family. We are entirely supported by our listeners and rely heavily on the assistance of volunteers. Many of our staff members were originally WCPE volunteers. By volunteering your time and talent, you can be a part of our mission to share Great Classical Music with the world.

Volunteering with WCPE gives you an opportunity to spend time with a wonderful group of interesting and dedicated people who love Classical music and want to support The Classical Station. Annually, approximately 175 volunteers contribute 6000 hours or more in support of WCPE. A few of our volunteers come in on a regular basis, and the rest come in as needed.

Service opportunities. The station utilizes volunteers to help with its daily operations in many different ways, like helping to assemble our fundraising mailings, answering phones during our semiannual pledge drives, preparing thank-you gifts for shipping, and receptionist duties. Both on-going and short-term opportunities are available.

Volunteer announcer training. Qualified individuals can receive professional broadcast training in the WCPE Volunteer Announcer Training Program, held once per year. Classes are provided by our program director and begin with announcer auditions. If you are accepted for volunteer announcer training, you will be invited to attend the full sequence of weekly 2-hour classes to learn proper voice techniques, as well as how to operate the studio and transmitter equipment. You will also learn how to work with the music playlist and program log. In return for this training, the station will request your commitment to host various air shifts on a regular or substitute basis.

Pledge drives. WCPE holds on-air pledge drives each spring and fall. We need volunteers to come to the station to answer phones and fill out forms. This is a great opportunity for you or your company or civic group to serve the community.

Help assemble our mailings. Several times a year, WCPE sends out newsletters and fund-raising letters to our members. While some of the envelope stuffing is done by machine, most of the work is done by our volunteers.

Administrative and telephone support. Office telephone support is needed on a regular basis during business hours. A minimum of once per week for three to four hours is requested in this capacity.

How do I become a volunteer? It’s simple! Just go to our web site (theclassical-station.org) and select the Volunteer link to complete the online application. Or you may call the station and request that a copy of the application be mailed to you. You will receive a reply from our volunteer coordinator.
WCPE
P.O. Box 897
Wake Forest, NC 27588

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Dated material—do not delay

**PLEASE NOTE:**
Don’t forget to renew your WCPE membership before the date shown below.