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Radio Free Boston: The Rise And Fall Of WBCN



Synopsis

Blaring the Cream anthem "Feel Free," WBCN went on the air in March 1968 as an experiment in free-form rock on the fledgling FM radio band. It broadcast its final song, Pink Floyd's "Shine On You Crazy Diamond," in August 2009. In between, WBCN became the musical, cultural, and political voice of the young people of Boston and New England, sustaining a vibrant local music scene that launched such artists as the J. Geils Band, Aerosmith, James Taylor, Boston, the Cars, and the Dropkick Murphys, as well as paving the way for Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty, U2, and many others. Along the way, WBCN both pioneered and defined progressive rock radio, the dominant format for a generation of listeners. Brilliantly told by Carter Allen and featuring the voices of station insiders and the artists they loved, "Radio Free Boston is the story of a city; of artistic freedom, of music and politics and identity; and of the cultural, technological, and financial forces that killed rock radio.

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Customer Reviews

I looked forward to the release of this book with great anticipation as I was an avid WBCN listener during my high school and college years in the late 70's and early to mid '80s. But whether you were a BCN listener or not, if you are interested in the early days of underground FM radio and the conception of album oriented rock, you will LOVE reading this book! I knew that Carter Allen would not disappoint me with his "biography" of the greatest rock radio station in history,but this book actually exceeded my already high expectations. Carter masterfully takes us through the earliest

"visions" of Ray Riepen, the first owner of WBCN as a rock radio station back in 1968, to the selection of this unknown group of crazy geniuses with the same vision to spin the records, through the changes as WBCN began to outgrow its audience, to its downfall in 2009. WBCN was a powerful force among the youth of Boston from its inception in 1968. WBCN was not only a radio station that played all the coolest, most upcoming music anywhere, but it was the voice and soul of the young people of Boston. They cared about everything we cared about, and they were not afraid to say it. They were our leaders. The whole crew at the radio station and the listeners had a love-love relationship and worked together as a team (as the legendary Charles Laquidara said, "We're all on one big mattress together!") to promote not only the best up and coming music, but also other important local and global causes of the time. WBCN taught us to hate top 40 programming. To listen to the BEST cuts on the albums, and not just the 45's that were being played on WRKO.

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