

Long ago, in a galaxy a few blocks away, The Playlist was something exclusively generated by professional broadcast DJs who maintained exquisite music tastes and played an earful of everything. But just before that brief magical period, for years and years and years -- soo many decades bro! -- only major record labels dictated what was featured on The Playlist. Not surprisingly, the people-powered movement to free The Playlist from commercial bondage began right here. It was San Francisco DJs in the 1960s and 1970s who democratized The Playlist, usurping corporate control of what music got played and heard. By making The Playlist *res publica*, local DJs anointed themselves and their listeners as the primary deciders of what got liked and shared.

This was way back in the day, when radio informed culture and analog was the source code. In the late 1960s FM became the bandwidth most preferred by a younger demographic who rejected the scripted polish and corny gimmicks on AM radio. As FM listeners they relished every discovery when a tuning dial landed on one of those spots where static mutes to reveal stereophonic vistas from the past, present, and future.

The women and men on Bay Area airwaves in those days developed a style of play that reflected the anti-establishment ethos emerging around them. They humanized The Playlist by speaking in their own voices as their authentic selves. Stations began to broadcast live from protests, lectures, and concert halls. Bay Area DJs were unafraid to speak truth to power and dared their fans to do the same. These broadcasters viewed their audience as peers rather than consumers or ratings points. By tapping in with their listeners as an extended family of counterculture aficionados, they were given license to explore and experiment. They shirked label influence and ignored singles, opting to play the deep cuts instead. This approach helped elevate the record album as a high art medium.

Music consumption was healthier when San Francisco DJs served fresh sounds with hot takes. Their sets were era-blind and genre-fluid, segueing effortlessly from songs to spoken word to psychedelic sermon to investigative journalism. Long before SNL's Weekend Update, Scoop Nisker was on The Jive 95 presenting hard-hitting news as performance art, while famously admonishing us "If you don't like the news, go out and make some of your own!" These mixmasters called their sonic gumbo, 'Freeform Radio', and it was so delicious we ate it up 'til it was all gone.

Today, radio play matters far less than streams from machines, but The Playlist has gained relevance after spawning sublistings that suggest *what to think* and *how to look* and *who to vote for*. As corporate manuevers and compromised algorithms conspire to regulate our sensibilities through a matrix of playlists, it has become imperative that we gather here today to get through this thing called life. Tonight, we experience The Peoples Playlist, curated by our selector-in-residence, an esteemed freeform specialist who has chosen songs that meet this moment. The Peoples Playlist is a tool for peace and a force for love. Tomorrow, when reality bites, remember what happened here -- how we were free like a bird -- and that last night a DJ saved my life.