

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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Visitor from yellow kingdom, who flies via an aerial hoop, arrives in enemy land, to be greeted by a pretty girl with a red rose, in "Rainbow War," a film short at the Canadian Pacific Pavilion. EXPO '86 continues through Monday, Oct. 13, in Vancouver.

EXPO '86 pavilions host intriguing films

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

VANCOUVER — Only a few more weeks remain to see EXPO '86 at Vancouver in British Columbia, but for those who are still planning to travel there, don't miss some of the world exposition's outstanding film shows.

Among the most highly rated pavilions, offering popular audio-visual presentations, are the General Motors Pavilion, the Canadian Pacific Pavilion, the British Columbia Pavilion, the Canada Pavilion and the Pavilion of Promise. The Czechoslovakian Pavilion also has an appealing film program.

Hit of EXPO is the GM Pavilion's "Spirit Lodge" show. You stand just outside the lodge, where a storm heralds your entrance and puts you in the proper frame of mind. Once inside, you watch an old Kwakiutl storyteller retell the legend of the Magic Canoe, that would take you anywhere with just one stroke of the paddle.

The live actor is paired with holograms, for pictures which arise from the smoke of the fire in the form of the raven and other figures from Northwest Indian mythology. Expo's theme is transportation and communication, and the storyteller raises the question surrounding today's high-tech methods of travel — "Are our machines making us more like humans or more like machines?"

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On the airwaves Freewheeling DJ is back in town

By Louise Okrutsky
staff writer

TO A GENERATION growing up in the Detroit area during the late 1960s-early 1970s, Birmingham resident Dave Dixon is associated with a style of radio in purposeful contrast to Top 40 stations.

The format he created for WABX-FM during that time allowed the disc jockeys to choose the records they'd play on the air. Perhaps for Dixon free-form radio was too successful. He was so closely associated with WABX that when he left in 1973 other Detroit radio stations shied away from hiring him.

"I would have mentioned their call letters a lot. I would have brought my audience with me," Dixon said.

"I was told when I left ABX I could never get another job in Detroit. After 12 years, it's blown over."

Lately he's repeating a new set of call letters in Detroit, WDET-FM. His program, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekdays, continues mixing and matching music without sticking to a play list. On Dixon's portion of the airwaves, Vivaldi can peacefully coexist with rhythm and blues.

"I didn't want to be a rock 'n' roll DJ, that's all I could play," Dixon said.

IN THE INTERVENING years, he turned to television, hosting a couple of movie programs for stations in Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"I'm an unlikely candidate for television," said Dixon, who tends in appearance to be heavy. After six months as a movie host, the station fired him, uncomfortable that he didn't fit the TV-personality mold. Six months later, bowing to a petition drive, the station rehired him. He stayed six years, filling in the gap between movie programs by operating a one-man advertising agency.

He dropped television after becoming afflicted with Bell's palsy, the facial paralysis that also has plagued Ralph Nader.

"It was time to get back into radio," Dixon said.

For Dixon, a Birmingham native who returned to live in that city, coming back to the Detroit market inevitably meant bumping into people who still associated him with a particular era in local radio.

"(WABX) is this glorious memory people have," he said. "There are a lot of people who want to talk about WABX." And Dixon's fairly willing to comply.



Dave Dixon of Birmingham, who now plays records from classics to rhythm and blues on WDET-FM, first built up a following in the Detroit area on WABX-FM during the 1960s-70s.

'To run a station by the ratings is to abdicate all creativity. Those that do that, to me, are panderers, not entertainers.'

— Dave Dixon
disc jockey

"WABX WAS JUST a dumb radio station. I invented WABX."

It was radio without play lists, without contests, without a Top 10 countdown, without a station identification jingle that played every quarter hour. In a market dominated by the old CKLW-AM with phone-in contests and disc jockeys with their own programmed patter, WABX stood out. Its format was copied by other FM stations.

"They made me program manager at ABX. I didn't want to do it. I have no management skills, no business sense."

He became disillusioned with the situation, quitting in 1973. "I quit, telling them they were compromising too much." Play lists and contests came back. Station owners became even more conscious of ratings.

To run a station by the ratings is to abdicate all creativity. Those that

do that, to me, are panderers, not entertainers," he said.

It was still a tough transition between manager of a thriving station and out-of-work disc jockey.

"It was a drop. One day I was an FM broadcaster, the next day, I was no one at all," he said. "Some people in town were so mean they denied me access to backstage. Other people were just the opposite."

NOW BACK in radio, Dixon believes that programming is a talent, requiring a musical ear.

"The more musical the announcer, the better the station. You can't just play what you like."

Dixon's personal picks these days include Stan Getz, Benny Goodman, Laurie Anderson and Paul Simon.

"Rock 'n' roll at its best is jazz. At its worst, it's pop music."

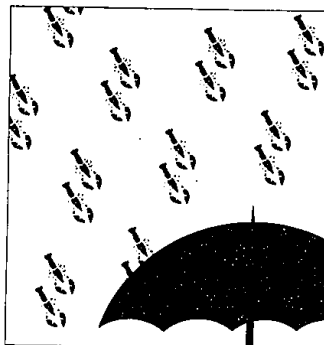
It's the sort of music that's attracted him since his days at Birmingham High (before the school acquired the Birmingham-Seaholm moniker). One of his classmates, Noel Paul Stookey, had a group called Birds of Paradise. Dixon drew the group's only album cover. "At some point he called me up and asked me to go to work for him as a writer." By that time, Stookey was involved with Peter, Paul and Mary.

He's credited with helping write "I Dig Rock and Roll Music," "The Song Is Love" and "Whatcha Name?"

"They were very democratic people. If they used your idea they gave you credit. I was made an ASCAP member. The royalties have never stopped."

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