



# Music Review Manual 2023

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89.1 WIDR FM – MUSIC REVIEW MANUAL – UPDATED: 8/22/23

## Purpose of Manual

**Chapter 1)** What music WIDR is looking for

**Chapter 2)** Where we get music from

**Chapter 3)** How we review/process that music

**Chapter 4)** How we play it on air

# Introduction

WIDR is a student-run radio station at Western Michigan University. We strive to help our volunteers to hone their skills in on-air show hosting, production, promotion, and music. Our motto is Radio Evolution - helping you evolve and improve your skills via radio.

## It Takes a Village

WIDR airs twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The majority of this time on-air is hosted by students and community members who volunteer their time and creativity on personal radio shows. The job of the music reviewer is to ensure WIDR is maintaining its influx of new musical sounds and is always searching for the latest evolution.

## Contacts

**General Manager:** The director of directors, the “GM” ensures the station as a whole is operating, fosters community within the station, and has the final say in all station matters.

Email: [widr-gm@wmich.edu](mailto:widr-gm@wmich.edu)

**Program Director:** Your supervisor and the director you should contact first with any concerns and questions. The Program Director is responsible for recruiting, training, and evaluating volunteers; and maintaining the on-air programming schedule.

Email: [widr-program@wmich.edu](mailto:widr-program@wmich.edu)

**Production Director:** Responsible for much of the station’s recorded content: Underwriting, PSAs, and DJ Show Promotions; and any live events - in the studio and out.

Email: [widr-production@wmich.edu](mailto:widr-production@wmich.edu)

**Music Director:** Communicates with promoters and artists to bring in new music and bands to the station, and is in charge of all volunteer music reviewers.

Email: [widr-music@wmich.edu](mailto:widr-music@wmich.edu)

**Promotions Director:** Promotes the station locally and manages the volunteer street team, on-air giveaways, and website.

Email: [widr-promotion@wmich.edu](mailto:widr-promotion@wmich.edu)

# Chapter 1 - WIDR Music Mission



## MUSIC MISSION STATEMENT

“WIDR strives to play groundbreaking music from Kalamazoo and greater Michigan. In addition to highlighting the cultural music from regions of the world represented by students at Western Michigan University.”

WIDR IS...

### **1. ALTERNATIVE**

For over 70 years now, WIDR has facilitated Radio Evolution. We have been proponents of alternative music during the lifetime of the station, and that isn't set to stop anytime soon! All genres are typically welcome, since “Alternative” is an umbrella term, but we try to stay away from the mainstream! THINK: WORLD, ALT ROCK, ALT FOLK, BLUEGRASS, BASCIALLY ANYTHING NOT IN THE TOP 100. WHILE AIRSTAFF HAS MORE FREEDOM OVER WHAT IS PLAYED DURING THEIR SHOW PLEASE KEEP THIS IN MIND.

### **2. INDEPENDENT**

Our relationship with independent music labels is the foundation of our library. We are able to play what we play because they send us music to review and consider for on air play. WIDR is a Radio Station based in Kalamazoo, MI, on-campus at Western Michigan University. Kalamazoo is a rich community with vast talent that we want on our station! Therefore, many of our label's work with and around Kalamazoo Artists. Both students and community members alike will submit music for airplay on WIDR's airwaves. Some of these artists are not attached to labels and WIDR is more than happy to give these independent artists, local AND countrywide, a platform to share their art and sound!

### **3. LOCAL**

WIDR strives to showcase music from first and foremost: Kalamazoo, MI. With such a rich tradition of music here, in Kalamazoo - WIDR has served as a platform for these

artists to showcase their talent. Looking beyond Kalamazoo, the Southwest Michigan area is blooming with artists from small towns like Augusta, and larger cities like Grand Rapids and Battle Creek.

## **4. CULTURAL**

Western Michigan University, and Kalamazoo is home to many international student. WIDR has programs dedicated to showcasing different regions and subgenres of music catered and hosted by international students.

## **5. QUALITY**

While WIDR is always happy to play submissions from independent, growing, and local artists, there is a certain level of quality we must uphold in songs we upload for airplay. For example, if a song is muddy (Vocals aren't quite clear, or it's not very easy to listen to), we probably shouldn't air it during our prime time. If possible, we try to see if artists have the most "cleaned-up" version ready for airplay. Friends don't let friends air low quality music!

WIDR IS **NOT**...

### **1. MAINSTREAM**

As a rule of thumb, WIDR strives to stay away from a lot of what mainstream radio plays. The Top 40, the Top 100, 200, just the most "popular" music. While we will aim to air what's popular in the community and with college students, we don't want to be just another radio station playing the same old that every other station plays. We aim for Radio Evolution- that's what makes us stand out! Alternative, cultural, and indie music are our lifeblood! You hear stuff on 89.1 WIDR FM that you cannot hear in other places!

### **2. ONE-DIMENSIONAL**

The continuous battle against monotony is never-ending, and that is true even with music we play! WIDR, while we play alternative, must strive for diversity in sound as well as artists! Many of our shows have different styles, playing World music, to Metal, to Folk, to Hip-Hop, and it just doesn't end there! As a station, through submissions and

through Air-Staff, WIDR aims to keep things interesting and avoid sounding the same all day long.

### **3. EXCLUSIONARY**

Even when a song may be good but not feel very “WIDR” (Weirder, darker, heavier, maybe even slightly more abstract) that doesn’t always mean it doesn’t fit in. For this purpose, WIDR has an OVERNIDR Block of programming, running from 12AM to 4AM. Think of it like a late-night TV Segment- Not what you’d usually see, but not something you dislike!

## Chapter 2 - Music Resources

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# Music Labels – Building the Digital Library

This is the list of all music labels that WIDR works with and the artists, genres, and shows that each label contribute towards.

Music Labels sent **Digital Copies** of their music, which are sorted by the music director and listened to by WIDR Directors, Staff, and Music Reviewers.

### **Dizzybird Records** (Grand Rapids)

Coming up on its one-year anniversary, Dizzybird Records is the brainchild of Nicole LaRae and Brian Hoekstra. LaRae and Hoekstra have made a lot of headway in dizzybird's short lifespan, with a focus on fuzzy, dreamy garage rock. The label has released music from Grand Rapids' own Heaters and Dear Tracks, Gringo Starr (Atlanta) and Las Rosas (Brooklyn), as well as a full plate of records scheduled for 2016.

### **Double Phelix Collective** (Kalamazoo)

Double Phelix is a collective of musicians and artists based in Kalamazoo. The group does it all: Write, produce and record albums for various groups in K-Zoo. Its ranks include over a dozen ensembles, songwriters, performers and engineers, including members from The Go Rounds, Maraj, Lasso, The Double Phelix Orchestra and more.

### **Earthwork Music** (Lake City)

Earthwork Music has grown to become kind of a folk-rock institution at this point. Operated out of Lake City, Earthwork's roster of nearly 40 artists includes some of the

state's most well-known roots rockers, including Joshua Davis, Seth Bernard & May Erlewine, Lindsay Lou & The Flatbellys, Steppin' In It and The Appleseed Collective. The label also holds the annual Earthwork Harvest Gathering on the Bernard family farm each year with over 90 acts and a series of workshops from all sorts of creators.

## **Emetic Records**

**(Flint)**

Emetic Records is an imprint specializing in death metal, doom, hardcore and the like. Among Emetic's signed artists are Noothgrush, Cold As Life, Bongripper, Celophys, Crowbar and Speedball. The label releases a new BelzebonG record this fall, so if you're into stoner metal — keep your eyes on this imprint.

## **Ghostly International**

**(Ann Arbor)**

Ghostly International began as an art and music collective in 1999 in Ann Arbor under the tutelage of founder Samuel Valenti IV. As a University of Michigan student with a love for electronica, particularly Detroit's underground scene, Valenti started the label with a release from fellow U of M student Matthew Dear. Since then, Ghostly International has grown into a global label with releases from some next-level electronic artists, including Tycho, Dabrye, Gold Panda, Matthew Dear, Matrixxman and Com Truise.

## **Hot Capicola Records**

**(Grand Rapids)**

Another new label out of Grand Rapids, Hot Capicola Records is run by Luke Schmidt and JP Pinckney. In addition to releasing music for its artists, including Lady Ace Boogie, DJ Dean Martian, Convotronics and AOK, Hot Capicola also assists with booking and management. Thus far, Hot Capicola has focused on hip-hop, but has made it clear they're open to exploring any genre.

## **Lower Peninsula Records**

**(Lansing)**



Lower Peninsula Records is a small, independent label out of Lansing that focuses on vinyl releases. Run by musician and engineer John Krohn, LPR has worked with some of Michigan's most ambitious bands, including Joe Hertler and the Rainbow Seekers, as well as Frontier Ruckus, Jake Simmons & the Little Ghosts, Husband & Wife and The Sights.

## **Salinas Records (Detroit)**

Founded in 2003 in Detroit, Salinas Records drops stellar records from both Michigan and out-of-state acts. Some artists on their roster include Radiator Hospital, Swearin', PS Eliot and The Ambulars. This month, Salinas releases Kicking Every Day — the debut LP from Columbus/Philadelphia four-piece All Dogs.

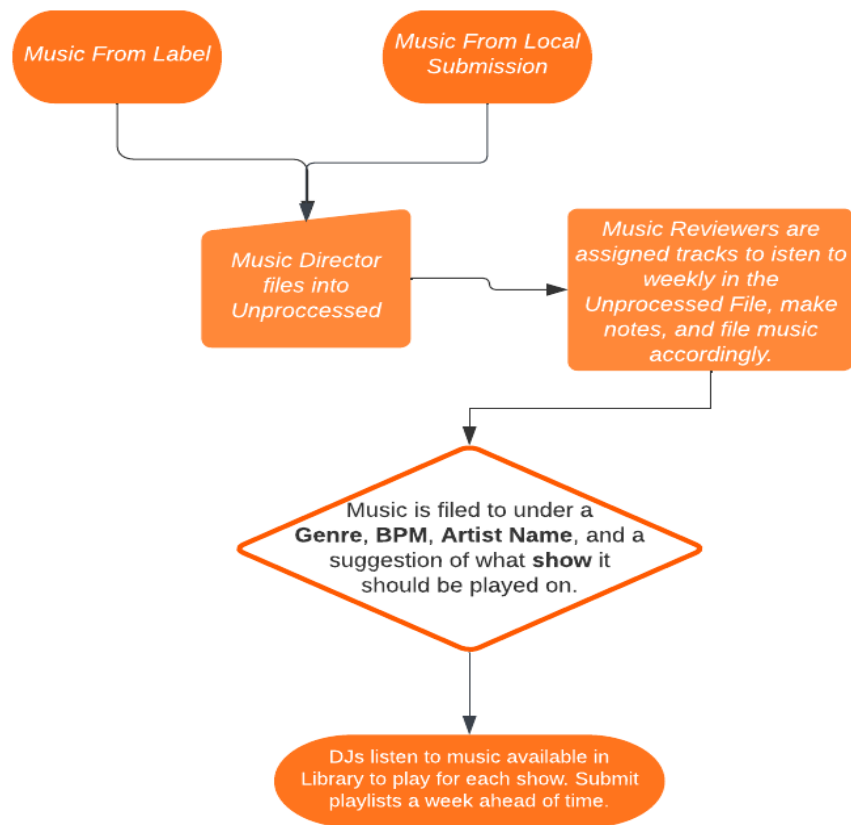
# **Independent Local Artist Submissions**

Our next way of getting music is from submission for airplay from our form on the website. It is regularly promoted to local acts, and we frequently solicit artists to drop their latest tracks be sent as WAV or MP3 Files to the Music Director Email.

# Chapter 3 - Reviewing & Processing Music

## What To Do with All These Files

- 1) Music is organized from ALL SOURCES by the the Music Director
- 2) Music Director files music into “Unprocessed” folder in WIDR’s Digital Music Library
- 3) It is the responsibility of the Music Director to assign tracks to music reviewers and staff members to ensure the “Unprocessed” folder remains up to date.
  - a. If it is not up to date, the responsibility of MD to manually process.
- 4) Music is reviewed based on the WIDR Music Guidelines, and filed under a **Music Review Form**
  - a. Artist Info
  - b. Genre/Subgenre
  - c. BPM
  - d. Song Details (Cold end, slow intro, really intense, very soft)
  - e. What WIDR Programs would feature this music



# WIDR Digital Music Library

The Digital Music Library is the collection of the songs that have been gathered for WIDR's Airplay.

## Folders

- **Unprocessed:** Music that has been gathered by the Music Director but not listen to or filed into the music library.
- **All Genres:** Each WIDR-Defined Genres, each with a two-letter id (ID)
  - **Artists:** Individuals,
    - **Tracks:** Songs

## How to Name/File Songs

These are the steps to delivering a file that can be played on air.

### Definitions

**Genre Code:** Two letter code to define WIDR Genre

**BMP:** One letter code to identify tempo and vibe.

**D/O/P:** Date of Publication (MM-DD-YYYY)

**Artist Name:** First, Last

**Track Name:** Name of the song

**Example:** (GENRE CODE)\_(BPM)\_ARTIST\_NAME\_TRACK\_NAME\_D-O-P

**Example with a Song:**

- 1) Song: Three Little Birds
- 2) Artist: Bob Marley
- 3) Date of Publication: 9/2/1980
- 4) Genre: Reggae
- 5) BPM: Green (G) Upbeat & a good vibe.

**Final File Name:** RE\_G\_BOB\_MARLEY\_THREE\_LITTLE\_BIRDS\_09-02-1980

# **Follow these Steps to file Music at WIDR**

## **Step 1)**

### **Listen to Unprocessed**

These are the tracks that have been gathered by our relationship with Music Labels, and our Local Independent Artist Submission files. These songs have yet to be listened to and organized into the proper folders. Music Reviewers are assigned specific tracks to listen to weekly and then discussed during the WIDR Weekly Music Review.

## **Step 2)**

### **Identify Genre**

The next layer of folders is Genre, genre can be defined by stylistic elements, song content, vibe, musical forms, and instrumentation. Try to do your best when assigning a genre to a song, it's not always a perfect fit, but we must be as general as possible.

#### **Genre Codes Available in Our Library**

- 1) Indie-Pop (IP)
- 2) Rap/Hip Hop (HH)
- 3) R&B/New-Soul (RB)
- 4) EDM/House (HO)
- 5) Rock (RO)
- 6) Metal (ME)
- 7) Non-specific Cultural Music (CU)
- 8) Latin Music (LA)
- 9) Middle Eastern Music (ME)
- 10) Pan-African Music (PA)
- 11) Afrobeat (AB)
- 12) Carribean (CA)
- 13) Reggae (RE)
- 14) East-Asian Music (EA)
- 15) South Asian Music (SA)

## **Step 3)**

### **Identify Artist and Song Details**

Name of the artists, name of the track, when the song was created, any additional information. Cold open, soft end, hard to hear vocals, etc.

**Step 4)**

**Identify the Vibe & BPM (Green, Yellow, Red)**

The BPM, or tempo of a song delivers a lot of information based on when you should play that track. Typically, it follows this guideline:

- **Green:** Upbeat and a great vibe, heavy rotation
- **Yellow:** Slower, good vibe, medium rotation
- **Red:** Slow, somber, delicate, light rotation

**Step 5)**

**Complete Show Suggestion**

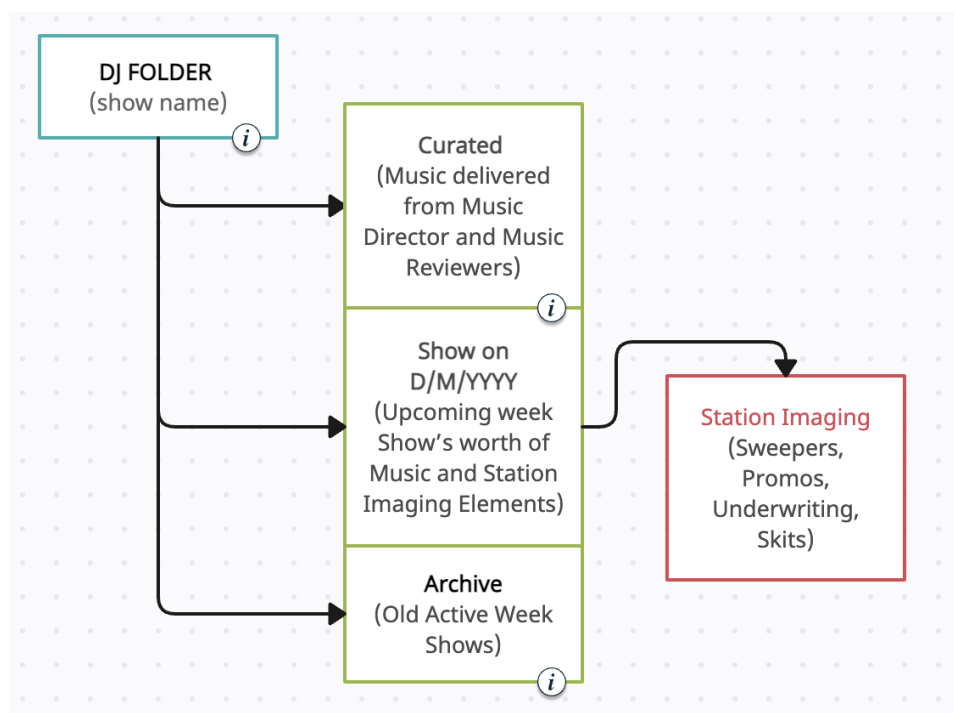
Based off the previous steps, attached suggested DJ Programs in your Music Review Form that would play the certain track you have identified. Drop songs into the “Curated” folder.

# Chapter 4 – Getting Music to DJs

## DJ Folder

Each DJ has their own folder in the WIDR Airstaff Microsoft Teams. Within each folder is a list of all the music that the DJ will play each week.

### DJ FOLDER HIERARCHY



- 1) DJs listen to and incorporate the curated music folder and drag it to their own folders
- 2) DJs read any notes made on the file name
- 3) DJs incorporate Curated Music and Curated Station Imaging Elements into their show into show.