



WSIE's Church Fine Tunes Playlist, Seeks Increased Support

by Megan Weiser
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EDWARDSVILLE - In a long tradition of providing great jazz music for Southwestern Illinois and the Greater St. Louis region, WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville is turning up the heat to the delight of its listeners, increasing its exposure and drawing more support.

The recent improvements are courtesy of WSIE's new general manager, Jason Church, who came to the station in May of 2018.

“We’ve been steadily making improvements since I arrived,” said Church. “The big change occurred when the station reformatted after an extensive marketing study was completed by master’s candidates in the SIUE Department of Mass Communications. Those results prompted us to add smooth jazz, blues and R&B to the traditional jazz format. We have been fine-tuning the music library and adding some much-needed artists that were previously not included.”

“We have also added more contemporary jazz pieces into the mix,” continued Church, who has worked in jazz radio for more than 20 years. “We offer a balanced mixture of old school jazz for those who have been with us for years and new school jazz and other jazz-related tunes, which helps attract new listeners. Everybody seems quite happy with the mix.”

“(WSIE) plays a wonderful mix of jazz, blues, R&B and contemporary jazz,” wrote Cornelius Osby on the station’s Facebook page. “This station is a welcome to the hearing of its listeners. Thank you WSIE The Sound.”

“Just excellent! I SO miss a great playlist...severely lacking in my town in Southwest Florida!” commented Jill Dunn on Facebook. “Keep it going, and thanks for the great SOUND!”

Another enhancement Church made to the station was adding a new category to the playlist – local and regional musicians.

“Tim Cunningham, Jim Manley, Kim Massie and Dawn Weber are a few local musicians people can now hear regularly on WSIE,” Church said. “We now have over 200 cuts from more than 70 area artists being played on the station. We have so many talented and hard-working jazz musicians in the area. Expanding this category is incredibly important, because it helps solidify our local connection and gives our area’s musicians more exposure. People can listen to us online all over the country and around the world, and hear the awesome musicians we have in St. Louis!”

In addition, the station increased its social media presence, doubling its likes on facebook.com/wsie887thesound.

“Fundraising is also up, but we still have a ways to go before we get to where we need to be,” Church cautioned. “To achieve our financial goal of self-sustainability, we’re working to increase listener donations, bringing on more underwriters, and beginning the process of grant writing. Our listeners may not know this, but up until July 1, 2018, we were receiving some state support to help offset our costs, but after July 1, 2018, that stipend was discontinued as a result of the Illinois budget crisis.”

“WSIE is St. Louis’ heritage jazz radio station,” Church explained. “We’re coming up on our 50th anniversary in less than two years, and we have been St. Louis’ home for this wonderful music for decades. St. Louis is, and has always been, a jazz town, and I have personally been a fan of this music and of this station since I was a kid. I invite everyone to tune in, whether it’s on your FM stereo, online or on your phone, we’re playing this fantastic music every day of the week, and I think you might just love what we’re doing.”

Looking ahead, Church’s mission is to continue to grow the station’s listenership and support to a level and rhythm that will have audiences tuned in for years to come.