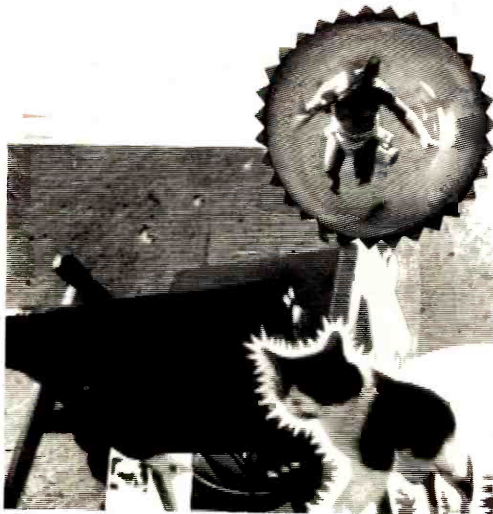


# Paul Simon

## "The Boy In The Bubble"



WBEN	KZZB	KSND	WPFM
WGHI	WKSI	KXYQ	WBWB
FM102	WBAM	WQCM	WSPT
KATD	WDLX	WGAN	KOZE
K104	KF95	WJSF	KTMT
WBBQ	KIYS	WJAD	SLY96
		WCGQ	OK95



From the Paul Simon album *Graceland* on Warner Bros. Records

Produced by Paul Simon Engineer: Roy Hulse

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## NEWS

### KMET

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attempt to siphon audience from new music KROQ, Urban KPWR, and CHR KIIS.

#### Black Friday

Each jock was summoned individually to the Sheraton Premiere Hotel in Universal City on Friday the 6th to hear the news from Bloom and Cody. Exiting the station are morning team Paraquat Kelly and newsman Rick Scarry, midday personality Cynthia Fox, PM driver David Perry, evening man Rick Lewis, late-nighter Jim Ladd, allnighter Jack Snyder, and parttimers Terry Gladstone, Randy Thomas, and Deirdre O'Donoghue.

Kelly had been at the station for nine years. Fox started ten years ago as an intern, and Perry, Ladd, Snyder, and Lewis had all returned within the last year for their second tours of duty at KMET. Ladd rejoined only three weeks ago, with a provision that allowed him to program his own show. Other fulltimers had reportedly signed new contracts as recently as October.

Kelly was the last live jock on the air. Though he hadn't yet been officially informed of the change, word of it had reached him. His last two songs were Bob Seger's "Beautiful Losers" and the Stones' "It's Only Rock 'n' Roll" — "one for all my friends who worked here at the station and one for the radio station... we'll leave it up to you to determine which song is for whom." Choked with emotion, his final words were "We all love you. Goodbye, Southern California. This is KMET, the Mighty Met."

#### Extensive Local Media Coverage

The mass exodus and projected format change received big play in the local press, testimony to the station's onetime market dominance. Four TV outlets, including all three network O&Os, covered it on their Friday newscasts. The fired jocks appeared en masse on rival KLOS Friday night and KLSX Monday afternoon to say farewell, reminisce, and take calls from listeners. On Monday, they appeared on Channel 9's mid-morning magazine show for a half-hour. The *L.A. Times* ran three pieces in its Tuesday (2/10) edition. KLOS continues to air promos with Ladd saying, "We're handing the rock 'n' roll candle over to you."

Some staffers were critical of station management. "None of the programmers after Sam Bellamy had a feel for what KMET was," said Perry. "They got the mechanics down but they didn't know where the heart was."

Kelly said, "It's depressing. It's like driving down the freeway and seeing the 'Hollywood' sign with an 'O' missing."

#### New Format Conjecture

It is not known whether long-time consultants Burkhardt/Ab-



rams' involvement will continue. Bloom and Cody say the decision to change format was finalized February 2 after extensive research conducted with Owen Leach was completed. That research, says Cody, indicated that "the station's image was very tarnished."

After examining a number of format options, including one that would have involved an extension of KMET's current format rather than a complete overhaul, the decision was made "to retool the factory," Cody said. "Without KMET having paved the way, we could never pull off this new format. But everything has a life cycle. The Beatles broke up. The 'Mary Tyler Moore Show' went off the air. KMET had a great run, but the phenomenon is over."

#### Bloom: "Most Difficult Day"

Howard Bloom started at then-sister KLAC in 1968, came to KMET in 1970, and became GSM in 1972 and GM in 1979. "Friday was the most difficult day of my professional life. It was very emotional," he commented. "The decision (to change) was a difficult one to make, but the extensive research pointed to the moves we're making on Saturday."

Strict secrecy surrounds the exact nature of the new direction. Only a handful of employees know "all the pieces of the puzzle," according to Bloom and Cody. Staffers privy to even selected elements of the new format, which involves extensive production work being done at outside facilities, have signed confidentiality agreements.

At presstime, speculation was leaning heavily toward the Jazz/New Age format. Its design will reportedly include some intriguing elements, such as employing actors instead of traditional disk jockeys. The actors would record vignettes written to reflect the target aud-

ience's lifestyle, such as a wife prodding her husband to wake up and get going in the morning, or someone leaving a humorous message on a friend's answering machine.

On the other hand, the dance rock reports are being fueled by the recent hiring of Promotions Director Jane Shayne, who once played that role at KROQ. Additionally, since arriving in August, Cody has taken KMET closer to KROQ musically, adopting a "94.7% New Rock" slogan and adding bands such as Screaming Blue Messiahs, Bangles, OMD, and Venetians.

#### Change Follows Sliding Ratings

The change comes on the heels of a severe ratings decline at KMET, which dropped 3.2-2.2-2.0-1.6 in the last year, landing in 20th place in the fall Arbitron. In the market's six-way AOR race, it trailed KROQ's 3.9, Classic Rock KLSX's 3.1 debut, and mainstream rival KLOS's 2.3. Soft KNX-FM tallied a 1.4, while hard rock KNAC/Long Beach garnered a 1.1.

KMET's heyday was from 1978-81, when it was the market's dominant contemporary music station. It played a large part in spearheading the migration of the contemporary music audience from AM to FM in the late '70s; it grew as once-dominant Top 40 KHJ declined.

KMET's peak of 6.4 in the summer of 1979 remains the highest share any AOR has ever notched in L.A.; no other album rocker has ever cracked even a 5. The station's erosion in the last five years was due to increased fragmentation — KLOS grew more competitive, KROQ and KIIS became forces, and, most recently, KNAC took-hits on the younger end and KLSX on the upper end.

The station has had five PDs since mid-'83, when Sam Bellamy, who guided the station through its glory days, exited. Musical direction changed with each new programming regime.