

Clear Channel's radio network stirs controversy

■ The conglomerate has denied corporate-level censorship, but acknowledges that suggestions for song lists were made

By Steven Neuman
for the Emerald

Immediately following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, a radio conglomerate with stations across the nation allegedly sought to avoid stirring emotions by blacklisting songs that might call to mind the tragic events, creating a controversy of its own.

Clear Channel Communications, a media conglomerate with the largest chain of radio stations in the United States — roughly 1,170 stations nationwide reaching more than 110 million listeners weekly — was reported to have released a list of approximately 150 songs not to be played on the radio.

The corporation recently made acquisitions of local radio stations including KDUK, KODZ and KPNW.

In the Sept. 19 edition of The New

York Times, an article stated that Clear Channel Communications circulated a list of songs that station managers were requested to avoid because of possible references to the terrorist attacks.

The company denied that it had indeed mandated the list of songs, according to the report in the New York Times. It said that the list had been an effort by local program directors to pull together their own improper song lists and was not the doing of corporate management.

Songs on the list, such as the Gap Band's "You Dropped a Bomb on Me," the Pretenders' "My City Was Gone" and REM's "It's the End of the World as We Know It" could be interpreted as being related to the attacks using literal translation of certain phrases.

Freshman Jessica Mauer said she thought it must have been a difficult choice for radio personnel to decide which songs were appropriate given the interpretive nature of music.

"It's absurd to create a list of songs that could stir emotion, because any

song can be interpreted by an individual a million different ways," Mauer said.

Since the article in The New York Times was published, other media sources have railed against what they say is flagrant censorship and corporate gagging by Clear Channel Communications.

Jay Kogami, programming director for campus radio station KWVA, said there were differences in the consequences that college and corporate radio stations would face in avoiding certain songs.

"In college radio we have more freedom; the disc jockey holds a lot of the responsibility for what we play, so it's hard to relate," he said. "It's very sad that (the attack) happened. It's just as tragic as you can get."

Kogami said if the accusation is true, it wasn't a good decision for the large radio network to censor its music.

"We use radio to connect people — to reach people. When we don't play all types of songs, we're not doing our job, which is connecting

Some songs called "inappropriate":

- Bob Dylan/Guns N Roses "Knockin' on Heaven's Door"
- Cat Stevens "Peace Train," "Morning Has Broken"
- Dave Matthews Band "Crash Into Me"
- Elton John "Benny & The Jets," "Daniel," "Rocket Man"
- John Lennon "Imagine"
- Louis Armstrong "What a Wonderful World"
- Metallica "Seek and Destroy,"

- "Harvester of Sorrow," "Enter Sandman," "Fade to Black"
- Neil Diamond "America"
- REM "It's the End of the World as We Know It"
- Talking Heads "Burning Down the House"
- U2 "Sunday Bloody Sunday"
- All Rage Against the Machine songs were requested to not be played.

Source: www.Reuters.com

For a complete list, go to www.dailyemerald.com.

people (through media)."

Valerie Steele, an early-morning DJ for Eugene's KDUK, denied the accusations that there was any list being used by the local radio stations. She said that as far as she had seen, a list hadn't been in use, rather her station manager had simply instructed the station workers to use their own judgment regarding questionable songs.

Steele did confirm reports that there had been some attempts by a

regional executive on the East Coast to compile the list and ensure that the local stations were complying.

Steele's statement supported the claims reported in the New York Times by a Clear Channel spokeswoman who said the song list had been "a grassroots effort that was apparently circulated among our program directors."

Steven Neuman is a freelance reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

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