

Solar Island - Subcity Radio

Best Entertainment Programming

Solar Island has been broadcast on Subcity Radio for about 5 years now. Initially starting as a late-night outlet for a group of first year Glaswegian stoners with an equal love of both Chris Morris and Bergerac, it has morphed through various guises over the years from a stint in the drive-time slot to a time-travel based scripted comedy and the occasional Dimbleby spoof, commentating at ancient university ceremonies.

With final year studies or work requirements taking up all of their time, Solar had to return to its roots and its original 3am Buckfast fulfilled motto:

**“Solar Island on a Thursday night.
Might be fucking amazing. Might be fucking shite.”**

No Script, no plot, just waiting to see who out of the five regular presenters would turn up each week. It has been incredibly liberating for the show and it has seen the most successful year in terms of listener figures and general interest in the show.

Devising the content

Despite not working on a script or plot, something would inevitably become the main drive of each episode - usually some ridiculous new scottish executive proposal or one of the many tedious campus affairs, but also new found experiences in the world of work and wider goings on in the world.

Developing the content

Although most episodes ended up with a main theme, it didn't mean that other topics were out of bounds, as it had done in previous years. When the show is at its best you can hear the topic change, someone latching onto the new thread and running with it. Sometimes it works, sometimes not...

Across the year the occasional voice or caricature that popped up as an off-the-cuff, on-topic joke then developed into a regular feature. It seemed to enable the other presenters to contribute with the knowledge of where the link was going, and without fear of derailing someone's idea.

Execution and production

The show is broadcast live, weekly, late night, solely on the internet, from a small sweaty cupboard with 2 mics and 1 pair of headphones between 5 guys.

This live late night slot, combined with the internet audience, gave the presenters a bit more freedom to cut loose, ignore many of the usual radio protocols and make what would be considered inappropriate content for a younger FM audience. The result is unstifled, organic, raw banter and comedy.

The up close nature and technical limitations of the Subcity studio drove a lot of the style. The only practical method of delivery was a fight for a mic when someone thought they had something better to say than the guy who was on air.

The show's presenting team ended up changing from week to week, and the different combinations provided interesting variations in tone, pace and style whilst still retaining all the Solar hallmarks.

Essentially, it's a bit of a rammy and an outlet for 5 idiots, but sometimes it's juice-sprayingly funny.

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On the CD

0.00 An excerpt from one of the first shows of the year from the nightly broadcasts during freshers' week. (note at 1.19 there is a half-second glitch which was not broadcast but is a fault with the recording)

1.32 Part of our 2 hour live coverage of Captain Birdseye's funeral.

2.10 A clip featuring the first outing of what would become one of our recurring voices on the show - the irate long suffering wife working the back-shift, trying to get some sleep during the day.

3.32 Someone mentions the phrase "real radio" which happens to be the name of a local commercial station, a favourite of taxi drivers and football phone in fans alike. Stupidity ensues.

4.40 The media was covering the first flight of the new airbus. Solar ended up covering it as well. Another first outing of what would become a regular character: pensioners on the bus who always double bag their shopping, just incase.

6.40 Tim decides he's had enough of everyone talking crap, grabs the mic and tries to bring some order to the proceedings, Matthew lampoons his attempts at criticising the output. Tim carries on and puts on a tune he's probably been trying to play for the past 20 minutes.