

# World Cafe Live turns 10

**Music.** A decade later, an unusual plan for a public/private collaboration has become a celebrated hotspot.



Valerie June plays a sold-out show Oct. 1. / PROVIDED

Ten years ago this October, entrepreneur Hal Real teamed up with the crew at University of Pennsylvania's nationally acclaimed WXPB station to devise an interesting joint concept: a live venue based on the sounds, vibe and communal sensibility of WXPB, with the station's offices and studios under the same roof.

World Cafe Live would become a first here — a for-profit venue and a not-for-profit radio station offering an all-access experience for devoted music fans. A decade later, it's time to celebrate their shared club-

house concept. "When we were building out the facility and raising money for 'XPB's part, we pointed to the fact that we would be in a central location with a big red neon sign that our listeners could point to and say, 'That's my radio station, I can visit anytime I want,'" says WXPB general manager Roger LaMay. "In a multi-platform world, in-person connection is crucial."

For Real's part, having an affiliation such as WXPB gave "the new kid on the block an important credibility with both musicians and music fans," he says. "XPB and the World Cafe radio show are respected brands. Folks rightfully figured that since WXPB decided to partner with us, we must be worth checking out."

Both LaMay and Real mention the synergistic role the University of Pennsylvania plays in their success — "it's a beachhead for real estate growth." A vibrant cultural hub at the gateway between the campus and Center City," LaMay says. Being surrounded by Penn and Drexel University "brings more folks our way and creates an exciting renaissance feel," Real adds.



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Dr. Dog treats World Cafe Live members and donors to an exclusive show Oct. 2. / PROVIDED

**WCL lineup**

**On stage this fall**

A series of events celebrating the 10th year are lined up, starting Oct. 1 with indie-folkies Valerie June and Sean Hayes, followed by a members- and donors-only event Oct. 2 starring Joseph Arthur, Suzanne Vega and Philly's own Dr. Dog.

An anniversary party only lasts so long, but

it does act as a springboard for WCL's schedule throughout the fall.

"Autumn's slate of established performers features 'The Simpsons' Harry Shearer, Sonny Landreth, the Bangles and Richard Marx, with emerging players like Blake Mills and Alice Russell behind them," says Real. Then there's WCL's commitment to Philly acts, starting with a record-release party on

Oct. 3 for Philly's hip-hop/bluegrass band A Fistful of Sugar. A Halloween jam will feature locally produced Baby Loves Disco.

"We're fortunate that we have room — two floors — for bands to grow, as was the case with local artists like Melody Gardot, Cheers Elephant and The Districts," Real says. "Plus, we're lucky to have had many local musicians on staff through the years."

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