

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

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## WKCR hosts 'Festival of Contemporary Writers'

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Over the weekend, the WKCR-FM staff presented a "Festival of Contemporary Writers," featuring a cross-section of the contemporary literary scene, from experimental poetry to commercial screenwriting. The festival began at 9 p.m. on Saturday and ran continuously for the next 25 hours, as the station broadcast interviews, readings, student poetry, and panel discussions.

The program featured prominent writers, including Andrea Dworkin and Michael Kassowitz, who wrote the screenplay for the film "Cafe Au Lait."

The broadcast also featured more experimental genres, including a three-hour "open mike poetry slam," led by "Collective Unconscious."

The analytical end of the festival consisted of three live panel discus-

sions on New York City in literature, art and AIDS, and women and literature.

According to Ronnie Koenig, BC '96, one of the organizers of the event, the primary aim of the festival was to "get new students interested in the arts."

In line with this philosophy, several Columbia students were invited to read their work during a segment called, "The New Beat." Michael Kramer, CC '95, who read poetry he had written during the summer, found that speaking to an invisible audience from behind a microphone was something entirely new and challenging.

"It was great fun," he said. "As you're reading, you're thinking—'oh my god, there are a lot of people out there listening to this!' It made me concentrate on my own voice, and made me more focused."

Not all students, however, seemed to approve so unequivocally of the festival.

"We got a lot of people calling to complain about the language that some of the writers had used," Koenig said. "People would call up and say, 'How can you, as a woman, tolerate that sort of language?'"

The festival's organizers, however, continued to broadcast uncensored.

"If you change the words," Koenig said, "you lose the meaning of what the writer is trying to convey."

For those who missed the broadcast, WKCR staff members said they plan on running highlights from the program in the near future.