

TURNING TUNES

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Assuring a successful event means choosing the right professional music service from the start. Among the most popular ways for providing customized party sounds is to hire a mobile disc jockey (DJ).

During the past few decades, the DJ profession, once very localized, has become a national business, as it's gone from a hobby to a full-fledged profession, observed an industry expert in a Mobile Beat magazine article (May/June 2001). In addition, a report of interviews of disc jockeys nationwide revealed a universal vein in their responses: Personal service is what separates one company from another.

The evolution of longtime area mobile DJ services leader Tunes by T mirrors both trends. As a kid, owner T. Campbell remembers listening to Casey Kasem's Weekly Top 40 and said "I knew every song on the radio by heart- including title, artist and lyrics." He went from carting his 45s and vinyl LPs to parties in the '70s, to launching his business in 1983. He started out with "a couple of turntables, speakers, a mixer and an amplifier from Marshall Music," eventually growing into the full-fledged, multi-system professional service it is today.

Campbell embraces the idea of individualized service as key to his success and always strives to put the clients' wishes first. "When they're hiring Tunes by T, it's our job to deliver exactly what they want." It means meeting with clients to define thoroughly their wants and needs long before the actual event, to guarantee a successful event outcome. He claims "75 percent of the people we talk to worry that their DJ may be cheesy or may try to steal the show," which he can assure will never happen to his clients.

Finding and training good DJs is a big part of the company's success. "To be good at an event, we need to teach them to be on their toes, paying close attention to the mood and the guests and know how to finesse and adjust," said Peter Mayor, Campbell's Operations Manager, who joined the company in 1989.

Wedding receptions, corporate parties and school dances represent a large percentage of Campbell's clientele, but he's also developed an enviable niche in sporting venues. A framed front-page Detroit Free Press article featuring Campbell along with many other articles hang on the wall behind his desk in his office. An excerpt from one article sums up his key role:

"...the Wings seventh man steps in. He has no stick, no skates and no pads. Just eight tape decks, a box full of mini-discs and a musical sense as attuned to the fans' moods as Dominik Hasek's on-ice sense is to the Avalanche offensive line..."

Today, Campbell has four mobile units dedicated to stadium/arena events including the Detroit Red Wings and Michigan State University athletics. About his sports clientele, Campbell has said, "I'm there to enhance the fans' in-game experience. I like to keep the music attuned to what is happening on the ice, the court or the field. If the atmosphere or the team needs energy, the right music can help the situation in a big way and in a hurry." Also, key-his almost 40 years playing competitive hockey himself makes Campbell that much more uniquely qualified for the job. Campbell loves what he does and it shows.