

Jazz Radio In/Near Santa Cruz

KCSM – 91.1 FM Several mountains between Santa Cruz and KCSM's transmitter near San Francisco prevent us from hearing this excellent jazz station in Santa Cruz, but their signal covers most of the Bay area, Silicon Valley, and San Jose. This may be the best jazz station in the world right now, with great jazz 24/7, except for four hours of very “free” jazz Thursday night (10pm to 2am) and three hours of Blues Friday night (9pm to midnight). I listen on the internet.

KUSP – 88.9 FM Jazz most evenings from about 9:30 pm to midnight. Programming varies widely, depending on the musical taste of the host. Some you will like, some you won't. Can be streamed on the internet.

KRML – 1410 AM, 102.1 FM Jazz almost all the time, most of it well-programmed, but lately the musical mix has included blues and pop-oriented music. Quality varies, depending on the musical taste of the disk jockey on duty. Also can be streamed on the internet.

Internet Radio

Most of the world's best jazz stations send out their programming on the internet. With a reasonably good internet connection, you can listen for free on your Apple or IBM computer. To access the station, search on its call letters and navigate around the website until you see a selection for “Listen Live” or “Listen Now.” Most use an internet audio format that allows you to use Windows Media Player (comes with Windows) to listen. You can listen on the computer's own speakers, or plug in headphones, or plug the headphone output of the computer into your home stereo rig. All it takes is a cable (from Radio Shack, Fry's, or Best Buy) with a mini-headphone jack on one end and a pair of RCA plugs on the other end (the small round plugs used by most home stereo equipment). You can also listen on your smart phone, but if you going to do it often, be sure you have a plan with unlimited minutes – it can get pretty expensive if you don't.

Another good way to listen to internet radio around the house is to buy one of the FM radio converters that are sold to play a computer or Walkman through an FM radio. If you're going to use it with a computer, buy a unit that plugs into the computer USB port for power, and to the headphone jack for sound. To use this system, first get the music you want playing through the computer, then plug in the FM converter, tune it to an un-used FM channel, and tune your FM radio to that channel. We use a setup like this to listen on FM radios in our bedroom, living room, kitchen, and workshop.

Some good jazz stations include

- WBGO (Newark, NJ) – Nearly full time jazz, but too much inane talking between records
- KPLU (Seattle) – Good mainstream jazz, in between morning and afternoon NPR news
- WDCB (Chicago) – Good mainstream jazz, daytime and overnight. Most of the jocks are musicians
- KUVO (Denver) – About 90% mainstream jazz Some news and specials
- KKJZ (Los Angeles) – About 80% mainstream jazz. Some blues and jazz-pop
- WGBH (Boston) – About 50% mainstream jazz
- KMHD (Portland, OR)
- Swiss radio <http://www.radioswissjazz.ch/>

Some of the best jazz programming on the radio is “Jazz With Bob Parlocha,” syndicated by WFMT, the Chicago classical station, and distributed via satellite to stations all over the US from 6 pm to 6 am Pacific time. Each station chooses any time within that period to broadcast it, and many of those stations are on the internet. KCSM carries it from 2am to 6am most nights, and from midnight to 6am

Saturday and Sunday night. WMOT (Nashville) carries it from 6pm-2am Pacific time every night, and until 5am on Saturday and Sunday mornings.. KUVO (Denver), KPLU (Seattle), KKJZ (Los Angeles), WGBH (Boston) also carry the program. Bob is a tenor saxophonist who lives in the Bay Area and plays with local big bands.

Another easy way to listen to internet radio is to buy one of the new internet radio boxes at Fry's. Most let you choose between a standard Ethernet cable or Wi-Fi, and have both built-in speakers and jacks to connect to your stereo.

It's also possible to listen to many internet radio stations with the Apple TV box, but you must listen through your TV set. This can also get expensive, since most TV sets burn a lot of electricity, and will run up your PG&E bill.

There is also excellent jazz on satellite radio. Last I heard, there were channels dedicated to "straight ahead" or "mainstream" jazz, to big bands, to vocalists, and to the imitation jazz often called "smooth jazz." If you like the music I'm playing, you'll probably like the "straight ahead" or "mainstream" channels, and maybe the big bands and vocalists.