

MIZZOU

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Around the Columns

In the not-too-distant future

Kyle Cook and Tony Layson, BA '05, MA '07, don't wear brightly colored jumpsuits. They don't have spindly, smart-alecky robot pals, and they haven't been shot into space.

The quick-witted pair hosts *Mystery Science Radio 3000* from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. every Sunday on KOPN. Like the program's TV namesake that featured a satellite stowaway and his animatronic buddies

cracking jokes in a theater during B-movies, the radio partners love to create their own fun.

If the show has a format, it's that it has no format. It starts with Cook and Layson's eclectic taste in music. Sometimes they'll spin records at the wrong speed for a laugh, occasionally they'll insert snide commentary over children's audiobooks, or perhaps they'll chat with the myriad off-the-wall visitors who pop into the station.

"We just kind of play it by ear," says Cook of the show that has had listeners staying up late for more than five years. "People show up, and conversations will just go on forever."

One of the hosts' favorite games is called The Hardee's Challenge, during which they start an album and try to complete a late-night round trip to the burger joint before it ends. One time, a sneaky saboteur descended on the studio and tried to play Paul Simon's *Graceland* before the gig was up.



Tony Layson, BA '05, MA '07, left, and Kyle Cook are the hosts with the most on *Mystery Science Radio 3000*, a late-night show on Columbia's KOPN. Photo by Nicholas Benner

“The CD was really quiet because they didn’t know what they were doing,” Layson says. “We could hear it in the car in the drive-thru.”

Guests consist of late-night partiers, fans with friends visiting from out of town, and the occasional walk-in Walken — a Christopher Walken impersonator.

“There was one pledge-drive show where we had a PB&J buffet, and we had about 40 people stop by the station,” Cook says. The duo does “whatever’s interesting enough to keep you awake.”

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