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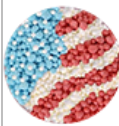
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What This Big-Ass, Twitter-Powered Metronome Is Doing in Downtown Austin

The more tweets, the quicker the beat By David Gianatasio

October 18, 2016, 2:32 PM EDT



In Austin, Texas, they don't miss a beat—or a tweet—thanks to a giant outdoor metronome created by classical music station KMFA-FM and ad agency Archer Malmo.

Built for \$14,000 ahead of KMFA's 50th anniversary next year, the 6-foot-high by 10-foot-wide aluminum and plexiglass installation sits downtown at the corner of Fifth and Neches Streets. Connected to a system that filters tweets based on geolocation data, the device measures "the tempo of Austin." The more the city tweets, the faster the metronome ticks.

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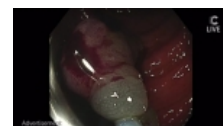
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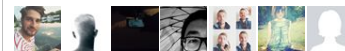
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The metronome is also [viewable online](#).

"We want people to give KMFA a try—it's not a stereotypical, stodgy classical music station," agency executive creative director Matt Rand tells AdFreak. "That audience happens to be younger and use Twitter more, so basing our 'heartbeat of the city' off Twitter volume is a fitting way to connect with them."

Actually, leveraging Twitter in this way seems [kind of 2011](#) in marketing terms. But remember, this is a classical station, where they routinely play music that was popular hundreds of years ago. So, for this crew, counting tweets is pretty up-to-date! (Just kidding. Tell Tchaikovsky the news!)

Decorated with cartoon imagery by designer Kong Wee Pang, the metronome exudes a retro-Southwestern vibe. It's almost like an outsized illustration from a children's book.



"People definitely stop and stare," says Rand. "Once passersby know it's powered by Twitter and that it's real-time, there's an a-ha moment that's fun to watch as people tweet away. It's also on the grounds of a city museum, so people are really treating it like an art piece."

He adds: "It's in a very visible spot downtown, right next door to a fire station, so that probably helps keep it protected [from vandals and thieves]. That, and praying."

The average pulse of Austin, by the way, is 90 beats per minute, though the pace soared to 120 bpm over Columbus Day weekend, owing largely to buzz around the second presidential debate. When Clinton and Trump square off again on Wednesday, who knows? That metronome could hit thrash-punk time and explode into oblivion.

CREDITS

Client - KMFA-FM
Agency - Archer Malmo
Senior CW - Dan Crumrine
Senior AD - Cat Albritton
Illustrator - Kong Wee Pang
ECD - Matt Rand
Developers - Abhilash Shamsunder & Nick Welp
Production studio - Flatfork Studio



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David Gianatasio	Gabriel Beltrone
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