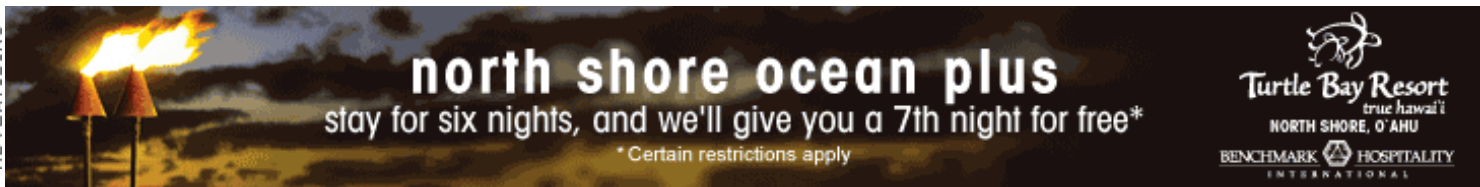


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Arts & Entertainment

TV & RADIO

Thursday, August 4, 2005

Tesh finds a loyal niche for his style

By [BILL VIRGIN](#)
 SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER REPORTER

John Tesh actually got his start in the entertainment business on radio. Long before his fame as co-host of the nationally syndicated television program "Entertainment Tonight," Tesh worked at a progressive-rock station in college and later at a commercial station doing news. One highlight of those early years was being suspended for referring to President Nixon as "Tricky Dick" on air.

But after a career in television news and sports and as a musician recording albums and performing concerts, Tesh is back on radio in earnest. He is host of a nationally syndicated show heard on more than 200 stations around the country, including KPLZ-FM (101.5), which carries it 7 p.m.-midnight Sunday through Thursday; a repeat airs midnight-5a.m.

The show has been on KPLZ since March and program director Kent Phillips has been pleased with the results. KPLZ's spring-book ratings surged over winter-quarter levels among all listeners and made even stronger gains in the station's target audience of women -- nearly tripling its audience share among women 18 to 34, for example.

The challenge for adult-contemporary stations is that in evenings "most of our audience goes to TV," Phillips said. "It's really difficult to find things" that will draw listeners in that time slot.

One of the few that has been able to do so is the Seattle-based, nationally syndicated show hosted by Delilah, heard locally on KRWM-FM (106.9) and featuring listener calls and song dedications.

Tesh acknowledges the shows are competing for the same listeners but says there are some differences. For one, Delilah's show sticks with adult contemporary music. Tesh does his show with its own music for about 25 stations, but others take Tesh's voice segments -- nine an hour -- and surround them with their own musical choices. That way the program works for adult contemporary, hot AC, smooth jazz, contemporary Christian and even rock stations. "The only format we're lacking is hip-hop," he says.

Tesh also says his show's emphasis is not so much on problems as solutions, advice for lifestyle issues including health, fitness, relationships, pets, kids and schoolwork. The radio show has a staff of seven researchers who cull magazines and newspapers

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for snippets of stories that are compiled into what is billed as "intelligence for your life." Says Tesh, "We're a newsletter type of show."

Religion is a major element of Tesh's personal and professional life, as evidenced by the music, books and concerts promoted on his Web site. Those beliefs provide "the background for the choices I make on the show," he says, such as deciding whether material is good for listeners but it's not an element of the show itself. "It's a secular show hosted by a Christian," he says.

The show has just eked into the black financially, Tesh says. He's been approached about doing a TV version but says his plate is more than full now. The radio show runs predominantly in evenings around the country, but he believes it could work well in afternoon drive time and hopes to see more stations carry it then. "A lot of people use it as destination radio," he says.

In other radio notes: **ADVERTISING**

- The on-again off-again Seattle-based translator at 92.9, which had been rebroadcasting a station from Aberdeen, is off again. Spokesman Scott Wooster says the decision was made to turn it off because of interference problems created in Snohomish County for listeners of Bellingham station KISM-FM (92.9). It could return with a redirected signal or with a relocated transmitter.

- Amanda Wilde's documentary on World War II music and the memories they inspire airs on "Weekday" at 9 a.m. tomorrow on KUOW-FM (94.9).

- Live performances on KEXP-FM (90.3) include The Purrs, noon today, and Sunmay, 8 p.m. Saturday.

- "Music With Moskowitz" at noon Saturday on KSER-FM (90.7) features songs recorded before 1930.

- Jim Wilke's "Jazz Northwest" at 4 p.m. Saturday on KPLU-FM (88.5) features a Jazz Port Townsend performance by Rickey Woodard, Terell Stafford and Bruce Forman.

- The James DeJoie Sextet performs on "Sonarchy" at midnight Saturday on KEXP-FM.

- "The Old Country" at 7 p.m. Sunday on KBCS-FM (91.3) features local band Zazou performing musette, a musical style that originated in France in the 1920s.

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