

KQLZ-FM 'Pirate Radio' Captures No. 3 Spot in L.A. Ratings

By CLAUDIA PUIG,
Times Staff Writer

KQLZ-FM "Pirate Radio," the aggressive station that swashbuckled its way into the Los Angeles marketplace less than three months ago amid a major advertising blitz, has rocketed to No. 3 in the ratings, according to an audience measurement company.

The Birch Radio Survey reported that KQLZ-FM (100.3)—known for playing a broad range of rock music and few commercials—has climbed from No. 14 to No. 3 since the station debuted March 17, nearly quadrupling its share of the listening audience.

Birch data shows that the station's average quarter-hour share of listeners 12 and older was 5.9% during April and May, compared to

1.5% during February and March—most of which time the station was operating as easy-listening KIQQ.

The April-May showing by KQLZ trailed only KPWR-FM (105.9)—or Power 106—with 8.3% of the audience, and KIIS-FM (102.7) with 6.6%.

Birch is one of two radio ratings services. The quarterly figures of the better-known service, Arbitron, will not be available until mid-July. The two ratings services employ different methods. Birch conducts telephone surveys and asks people to recall what stations they have listened to over the last 24 hours, while Arbitron bases its data on information recorded by listeners in a personal diary over a seven-day period.

KQLZ plays what program director and morning deejay Scott Shannon calls "free-form Top 40."

Listeners are as likely to hear New Wave fare such as XTC or Fine Young Cannibals as they are hard rock bands such as Guns N' Roses or Motley Crue. Classic rockers like Led Zeppelin, Peter Dinklage or Bruce Springsteen are also on the playlist, as are dance music rappers like Tone Loc.

"We play oldies, we play newies. . . . It's an off-the-wall concept that tries to fit together several different types of music on one radio station and still maintain a level of familiarity so the station will be a success in the marketplace," said Shannon, who is also a vice president at Westwood One, which bought the station from Outlet Communications for \$56 million.

The lack of advertising clutter is what has attracted the most attention to "Pirate Radio." For the first

10 days, the station broadcast music free of any commercial interruptions, and still features significantly fewer commercials than other rock stations. Also kept to a minimum is "deejay yakking," as Shannon calls it, with his own morning program probably featuring the most banter and humorous segments.

The arrival of Shannon—one of the most popular deejays in New York—has intensified the L.A. radio wars. The outspoken deejay has led a very public battle against his rivals, Rick Dees of KIIS-FM and Jay Thomas of KPWR, urging listeners to call in with the names of the radio stations they "flushed" in order to switch to KQLZ.

For example, when a caller phoned in for tickets being given away for a rock concert Thursday morning, Shannon seized the op-

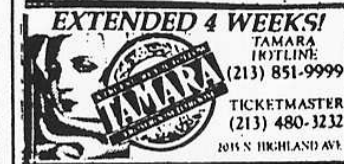
portunity to thrust a quick jab at Dees.

When the caller said she was from Tarzana, Shannon asked: "Do you see Rick Dees driving around out there in his—what does he drive—in his fancy sports car?"

The caller responded: "I hope not."

For that, the caller was given tickets to see Poison in concert and a Pirate Radio T-shirt.

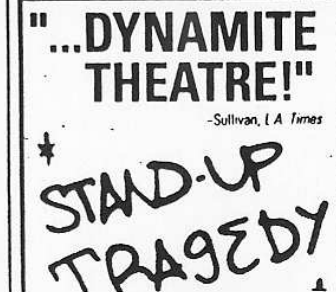
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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Heritage Shows Its Heritage

By CHARLES PERRY

You can't drive down Main Street and miss all the work that's gone into Heritage Square. Some kind of Santa Monica historical museum seems to be involved, but of course the real question is: What about that other

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Hong Kong-Styled Empress Pavilion

There it sits, a huge spanking new shopping mall filled with the fresh smell of damp cement. It's hard to believe it's Chinatown. The escalators that silently whisk people from level to level inhabit an almost empty space, and most of the shops have yet to be occupied. Still Empress Pavilion, 988 N. Hill St., (213) 617-9898, the lone occupant of the mall, is already packing them in.

And no wonder: normally you'd have to drive to Monterey Park to find one of these enormous restaurants in the Hong Kong style. In the daytime diners sit back and watch the carts filled with dim sum passing by, stopping one whenever a particularly delectable tidbit floats into view. Was it my imagination, or were there more carts than are usually found in a dim sum palace? At night the place is fancier, with real linen napkins and one of those giant menus off which it takes forever to order. Day or night, bring a wrap. Like most of the huge Hong Kong restaurants, the temperature in this place is absolutely Arctic.
—RUTH REICHL

BEST BITES

A Fund-Raiser for a Bicentennial Party

Got \$125 to spare? Then you might want to know about the fund-raiser being held at Citrus on Sunday.

A dozen of our best French chefs, including Citrus' Michel Richard, Michel Blanchet of L'Ermitage, Jean-Pierre Bosc of Fennel, Claude Segal of Mabe and the two chefs from Tulipe are banding together to put on a huge French bicentennial bash at Hollywood Park on July 16. To raise money for that affair, they're having this one. It's a