KMKZ Returns To Classical

By Lon Helton

Following a seven-month fling with Country, KMKZ/Phoenix will return to Classical format between July 8-14. Here's the rather complicated scenario:

Affiliated Broadcasting took over Classical KHEF in early 1985. Assuming that Affiliated wouldn't retain the Classical format, KMKZ changed from Oldies to Classical. However, Affiliated, which changed stations to KONC, affirmed its Classical commitment to the Phoenix marketplace.

In March of that year, Affiliated and Larry Mazursky, owner of Big Island KLFF and KMKZ, struck a deal for Affiliated to buy KLFF. It included a provision that KMKZ would not compete in the Classical arena.

As this was transpiring, KJJJ-AM & FM dropped Country. Perceiving a hole, KMKZ moved to Country to honor the contract. Soon after, however, the sale of KLFF to Affiliated fell through. Then about seven months ago, KONC dropped Classical for Transistor's Format 41.

In the meantime, KMKZ was able to improve its 3000 watt signal, licensed to San City, so it would cover the entire valley. Armed with a stronger signal and without the competition from KONC, which had been Classical for 18 years, KMKZ decided to return to the format.

Station Manager Rick White told R&R, "From a business viewpoint, we're very pleased with how this whole thing shakes out. We feel that we're giving something back to the community." Mazursky was very committed to Classical and had it not been for the serious offer, he would have stayed with it.

"We went Country because we saw it as an opportunity. Of course, KMKZ is a legendary station and very difficult to go up against, but we felt we could benefit by being the only FM Country station.

"We're really returning to our original game plan, which was to be able to sell the Music Of Your Life and Classical formats in combination.

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provides a solid oldies option in San Francisco," he said, "which until now there really hasn't been. KFY was basically oldies, but has since been streamlined to make a great combination with the KRO.

As part of the switch, several staffers were let go, including KSFQ's bright personality Al Colina.

KYY evening talent Amor Manshach, KYY morning man Jeff Clark, and KYY News Director George McManus. Joining KYY on-air are former KHYT/Tucson PD Scott Forrest and former KTH/Kos Angeles talent Pat Evans, who will also handle production duties. Further "staff changes are expected.

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no personnel changes have taken place, with PD Bobby Hatfield and the entire airstaff remaining.

Meltzer also announced he'll be leaving the station upon the ownership change and is looking for new opportunities. Prior to WZKC, Meltzer spent five years with Mid America Media, including a four-year stint as GM of WTRX/Flint before becoming Mid America's VP/Radio.

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helping set up promotions with clients, as well as the overall station operations. We'll continue to be consistent and remain very involved in the community.

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based in Cleveland. Popovich said, "I'll be able to very closely monitor the competitive situation in this market." A former PD at K101/San Francisco, Gardner fills the vacant position created by the recent departure of seven-year WLTF morning man Ken Morgan. Gardner has also worked on-air in Dallas, San Antonio, San Diego, and Salt Lake City.

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here," Hall said, pointing to Salt Lake City. "AFTER all, "KSSH-FM has been winning by default for the past several years as a pretty tight AOR, if it can be called that. KJJJ-AM is a broader-based format appealing to 25+ males. We're about 60/40 noncore/ core, going as far back as Elvis." 

Observed Devine President Chris Devine, "Everybody at the station reports to Drake, and as we grow he'll assume more responsibility in each acquisition. Although the duration of our relationship with Drake has been short, he's demonstrated an ability to take on these responsibilities. Drake displays not only a dedication to the company, but also the management style we try to maintain on a corporate level."