

# TV Sunday

MTV's most popular veejay doesn't intend to spend the rest of his life introducing Britney Spears videos. He has plans beyond "Total Request Live" and music-video TV. He's talking about branching out mogul-style into sitcoms and movies. And a lot of important people are listening.

By MICHAEL GILTZ

# EVERYONE WANTS A PIECE OF CARSON DALY

TEENAGE girls want Carson Daly. They squeal over his every move while camping outside MTV's Time Square studio where Daly hosts "Total Request Live" — MTV's afternoon countdown show that's become the network's most popular series.

Record companies want Daly.

They burn to have videos promoting their newest bands debut on "TRL" — especially since Daly's been credited as a major reason for the out-of-the-box success of Britney Spears, Limp Bizkit and others.

The networks want Daly. For the past year, they've been sending Daly pilots for upcoming shows and asking his opinion about what "the kids" will think.

In fact, CBS was so taken with after he hosted the Miss Teen USA beauty pageant last fall that they've tapped Daly to do the same for the Miss USA contest next week.

Everyone else wants Daly, too.

"Entertainment Tonight" spotlights him on "Conversations with Carson." Movie execs keep wondering if he can act. (Daly plays himself in an upcoming made-for-TV spoof of boy bands called "Zgether.")

And when Rolling Stone publisher Jann Wenner spends \$50 million to relaunch US magazine as a weekly next month, it will include Daly on the masthead. (He'll do a regular column, probably consisting of even more celeb Q&As.)

Obviously, this 26-year-old Californian is going to need shades for such a bright future, right?

"I guess it depends on my future, which is a little bit up in the air," insists Daly. "I'm in the process of renegotiating my contract so . . ."

He pauses for a moment and then laughs.

"Apparently, I'm not supposed to be talking about that."

But MTV isn't about to let their biggest star slip away. He's the key to the runaway success of their afternoon smash.

Fans vote online or by phone for their favorite videos; artists come by for a

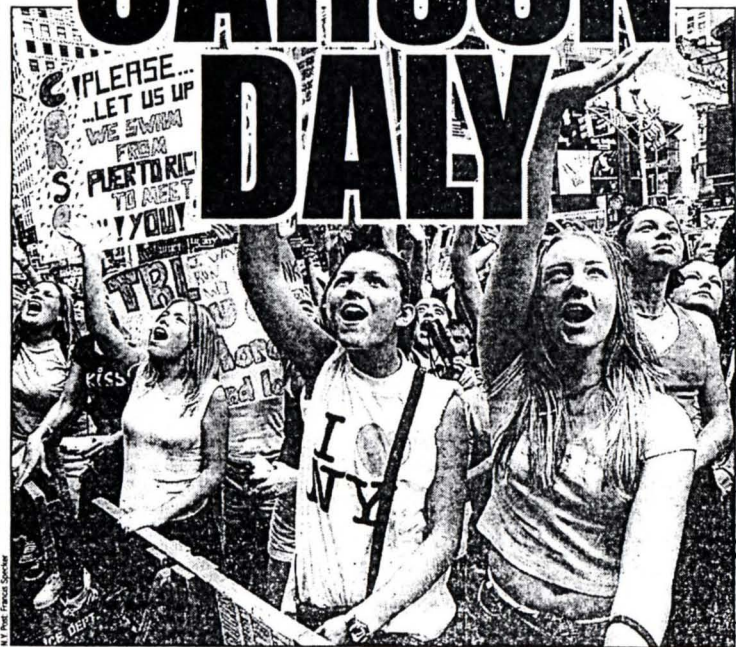


Photo: Spencer Platt

chat or to screen their latest opus and the crowds outside give it all the fever-pitch excitement of a rock concert.

Daly hosts it all with ease, seguing from bubblegum pop to the latest rap star with sincere enthusiasm that never seems fawning.

"The funnest part for me is putting the least likely people in the same room," says Daly. "One show we had the Wu-Tang Clan and Britney Spears and Melissa Joan Hart. I'm standing in the middle of them all and Wu-Tang-like, 'Whassup girl!'"

Daly's easy laugh

such an odd mix is infectious. That's why MTV flew him out to L.A. to sweet-talk a convention of TV critics and hype upcoming events like the airing of MTV's one-millionth video (they'll give away \$1 million to go with it), and "TRL's" roadtrip across the country.

Would Daly walk away? Not yet.

But the sticking point in negotiations doesn't seem to be money. (Obviously, they'll be giving him a lot more.)

Instead, Daly wants to map out his future. That future will include more behind-the-scenes work as



## CARSON DALY INC.

Host — MTV's "Total Request Live"  
 Reporter — "Entertainment Tonight"  
 Columnist — "US" magazine  
 Bert Parks of the future — host of CBS's "Miss Teen USA" and "Miss USA" beauty pageants  
 Web presence — www.carsondaly.com  
 TV and film production company — in the works

a producer or writer or director of films, sitcoms and other entertainment shows.

Dick Clark hosted "American Bandstand" — the show "TRL" is often compared to — for an astounding 32 years. Daly can't imagine doing it for that long.

But he does admire Clark's ability to forge into other areas of the business. He even searched Clark out to get some fatherly advice.

"Dick Clark was really

cool," says Daly, who exudes his own amiable charm and other entertainment shows.

"It was a very personal meeting with just him and I in two big chairs. He told me what he was going through when he was my age."

Clark certainly approved of Daly's desire to explore other aspects of the business.

"I would have a hard time seeing myself sitting on the set and being the actor all day long," admits Daly. "But

it's a big world out there and — like the screaming fans in Times Square — it's waiting for Carson Daly to come down from the MTV studios.

doing that and being part of the production side behind the cameras? Slowly but surely that's really grabbing my interest."

That's why his negotiations with MTV are focusing on development deals.

"At this point I'm sitting down with MTV Films, flying to L.A. to meet with them and saying, 'Hey, let's get in business. I'm looking to first of all go to my own company [IMTV] which has been so good to me and saying, 'These are all my areas of interest and you guys have outlets for them, so let's sit down and talk

about that."

"Besides, the scripts, the topics — I'd want to write and/or direct — that would certainly be the audience," he says.

To that end, Daly's been working on sitcom and movie ideas with MTV producer and roomie Jason Ryan (along with some other friends). They plan to film a short later this year in New York and then take it from there.

Daly's steady rise looks like the result of a savvy career plan, but don't believe it.

"I'm an idiot," insists Daly. "I don't know any players in the business. I should probably buy a Who's Important Almanac before I say something stupid in front of the wrong person."

Perhaps his carefree attitude comes from having already achieved his dream — and it wasn't MTV.

Daly's main goal in life — after a career as a professional golfer proved out of reach — was to decay for legendary L.A. alternative radio station KROQ.

"When I got the job there at 22, I was the first full-time on-air talent they'd hired in like seven years," says Daly — quite an accomplishment for a guy who listened to KROQ every day growing up.

"I'd even sit in front of the mirror and practice saying, '106.7 KROQ.'"

Having accomplished that four years ago, everything else is just a bonus — even if that bonus includes being romantically linked with actress Jennifer Love Hewitt and pop star Christina Aguilera.

But Daly isn't a mainstay on the party circuit or the gossip pages. Perhaps another reason he's approaching fame with equanimity is the faith he became serious about in high school and that almost led him to the priesthood.

But in the world of pop culture, the only faith most media outlets will tolerate is the study of the kaballah or some other fad — as Daly quickly found out.

"When I got to MTV, I wrote an article about my father's death and my mom's battle with breast cancer [she's fine now] and I told about how faith helps me," he says.

"It's amazing — you're trying to say something positive without sounding preachy and all of a sudden Howard Stern is calling you a Jesus freak."

But "the kids" — that is, the fans who've made Daly a star — came through again. "I got like a gazillion letters from teens saying that was so cool," he says proudly.

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