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## KCSN could be in for change

By Dana Bartholomew, Staff Writer

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NORTHRIDGE - The programming director at radio station KCSN-FM (88.5) has retired, signaling a potential change at the San Fernando Valley's only public radio station.

Martin Perlich, the station's eclectic music programmer and radio personality since 2000, retired Tuesday, KCSN officials said.

A host of the award-winning "Martin Perlich Interviews," Perlich had engaged world-class composers, performers and conductors such as Pierre Boulez, Marcel Ophuls, Gore Vidal and John Adams in on-air discussions.

"It was great working with him, his interview style, the persona," said Fred Johnson, general manager for KCSN, which operates on the campus of California State University, Northridge. "He was a dynamo."

The 70-year-old author, programmer, disc jockey, and interviewer will soon head to Europe and write books, Johnson said. Perlich, author of "The Wild Times" and "The Art of the Interview," has been broadcasting on L.A. radio and TV stations since the early 1970s. Perlich could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Rumors about Perlich's exit have been circulating among the L.A. classical cognoscenti for months, ever since the award-winning station canceled its most recent pledge drive.

Some listeners feared that KCSN would be handed off to outside management in an effort to make it more commercial - and mainstream.

They feared losing the station's signature arts-and-roots blend of classical, blues, bluegrass, big band, new age and jazz.

"KCSN is the better of two classical stations in Los Angeles," said renowned classical music critic Alan Rich, prior to Perlich's retirement. "My guess is that they are trying to turn the station into something other than a local treasure."

In a recent letter to concerned listeners, a university dean said CSUN has been evaluating the station's mission.

Robert Buckner, dean of the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media and Communications, said the KCSN audience is so small, the station no longer qualifies for Corporation for Public Broadcasting funding.

He also said few dollars have been raised from listeners during recent pledge drives.

"This disconnection between the station and the larger listening audience both on- and off-campus has (led) us to reflect on the future of KCSN," he wrote.

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Bucker was off campus Wednesday and unavailable for comment.

Johnson said that, despite Perlich's retirement, he sees no immediate change at KCSN. Bernie Alan, formerly of KCET (Channel 28), will take over Perlich's afternoon disc jockey slot.

"The powers that be are still looking around and deciding the feasibility of the format," he said. "Nothing is really going to change in the near future."

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Martin Perlich has "opted for retirement effective immediately," according to the opaque memo posted by Laura Stegman at [PRLosAngelesMediaMoves](#). KCSN is the music and news station at FM 88.5 out of Cal State Northridge.

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