

JOHN TESH

Big Band

Twenty five years and 50 plus recordings into his multi-faceted, ever-evolving musical career, John Tesh is finally ready to swing—not metaphorically as in the cliché “for the fences,” but literally. On his new *Big Band* collection and accompanying public television special distributed by APT titled “John Tesh Big Band Live!”, the keyboardist fronts a full blown ensemble and horn section playing Great American Songbook classics. The projects mark an all-time first for the lifelong musician—letting his lead vocals shine front and center. For the four-time Emmy Award winner and two-time Grammy nominee, these projects are unique creative departures from his rich history as a composer and performer of “sports music,” new age, contemporary jazz and inspirational works. More importantly, and in a deeper sense, they mark a return to his musical roots.

Tesh’s highly successful and varied career path includes a 10-year run as anchor on *Entertainment Tonight*, six hit public television specials, including his landmark *Live At Red Rocks* in 1994, a string of #1 radio hits, his popular nationally syndicated radio show “Intelligence For Your Life” in which he has 8.2 million listeners, and a high profile advertising and marketing company. His musical accolades since releasing his debut album *Tour De France* in 1988 include seven million units in total sales; a *Keyboard Magazine* Award; a 2003 Grammy nomination for “Best Pop Instrumental Album” for his double CD *The Power of Love*; and gold certification for his *Live At Red Rocks* album.

A self-proclaimed school “band geek” playing trumpet in marching and jazz bands in junior high and high school, Tesh was proficient on the horn and piano from the age of six. He studied with teachers from The Julliard School, and was named to the New York State Symphonic Orchestra in high school—while also playing organ in a rock band. Tesh got hooked on Hendrix and the Doors, but also has fond memories of his parents spinning Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Count Basie at parties in their Long Island home.

With his latest musical ventures, Tesh not only pays homage to his early days as a musician, but also fashions a journey inside the jazz, big band and swing music that shaped the world from the early to mid 20th Century. Recorded at Capitol Records Studios in Hollywood, where Sinatra recorded many of his most enduring sides, *John Tesh Big Band* features exciting new arrangements of nine standards and three familiar Tesh originals. Tim Landers, Tesh’s musical director for the past 25 years, chose Tony Guerrero and Willie Murillo, two veteran jazz trumpeters, to do the 25 piece horn arrangements and orchestrations, respectively. The classic selections include “The Summer Wind,” “I’ve Got The World On A String,” “The Way You Look Tonight,” “Blue Skies,” “In The Mood,” “Sway” and “Beyond The Sea.” The re-imagined Tesh originals are “Barcelona,” “Spanish Steps” and “Give Me Forever.”

The APT (American Public Television) hour-long public television special “John Tesh Big Band Live!” features 11 of these songs, culled from two live performances for an invitation only audience of 400 enthusiastic fans (including numerous teens suddenly discovering how cool this

older music is!) on a custom stage built at Quixote Studios in Southern California. The live band featuring a 12-piece horn section includes some of Los Angeles' top session and touring musicians. A multi-media musical presentation with photographs and history provide context for the era in American culture that the music represents. The show also includes a special segment on the music of World War II, with a medley of instrumental songs from the period, punctuated by a reading of excerpts from Tesh's father's WWII diary.

During the 2011 holiday season, Tesh embarked on a Christmas tour with the big band, performing a mix of these pieces and holiday classics they recorded on the album *Big Band Christmas*. Tesh originally debuted his big band format on select dates of his U.S. tour in early 2010. The overwhelming response to these songs, arrangements and his first attempts at lead vocals (after a lifetime of singing in choirs at church) convinced him and Landers to move forward with a full-fledged recording and public television package.

"I learned an interesting trick from Sting when I covered his tour once for 'Entertainment Tonight'," says Tesh. "He would hide a video camera onstage that pointed out towards the audience, so you hear the sound of the concert while seeing how the audience reacts. We started doing that during these early big band shows and we could see instantly the way people were reacting – with arms around each other, smiling, singing along with me to 'Blue Skies.' My goal is always to make an emotional connection with my fans, so I was inspired by this type of response. I said to Tim Landers, 'Rather than play the old stuff over and over, we could do this music for the next 15 years. It was a way of growing up and embracing the music of my childhood which I have always loved. We talked about how that could happen. He said it would take a lot of work and be very costly, but I knew it would be worth it.'"

For the past 10 years, Tesh's dreams have also branched out to include Tesh's syndicated radio show "Intelligence For Your Life," which reaches more than 8.2 million listeners per week across the U.S., Canada and the U.K. His advertising and marketing company, TeshMedia, handles clients such as numerous Fortune 500 companies, including General Motors, Home Depot, Macy's, Kohl's PetSmart, Amway, Geico Insurance and PetSmart. Tesh's book "Intelligence for Your Life: Powerful Lessons for Personal Growth", has spent time on the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Wall Street Journal* & *Amazon.com* best-seller lists. The award-winning daily and weekly show he calls "purpose driven radio", recently secured the trademarks for three more categories in their "Intelligence for...." family. "Intelligence for Your Health," "Intelligence for Your Pets" and "Intelligence for Your Love Life" have been added to Tesh's core brand, and will be developed into stand-alone content-rich websites with products designed around the "Intelligence" Tesh and his staff have gathered in the 10 years since they launched the show.

The impetus for "Intelligence for Your Life" was Tesh's wife, actress Connie Sellecca, whose nightstand was covered with issues of Oprah's Magazine, "O". "We wanted to create a show for people like her, who don't have time to read all that, but are interested in being better in everything they do," he says. "There is so much information out there, but not enough information about how to find it, and where to go with it. The idea was to create a business

where we could be curators who pick and choose the information that we think our audience would like to hear about. If you couldn't get to those magazines, we, along with the researchers we hired, could do it for you. People have called me the "Oprah of radio", but the difference is that our pieces are sometimes very short, like two minutes, or even 25 seconds—all geared at motivating listeners to move forward...it's all about passion and purpose. If something I share can help save someone's marriage, inspire someone to go to the doctor to get checked out, or spend more time with their kids, I've done my job."

While the big band experience will be new to many John Tesh fans, his decades of success in creating popular instrumental music—when he could have kept his "dream job" of hosting "ET" -- inspired him to reflect recently, "lately, I've become the poster boy for quitting your job and following your dream."

"For this new phase of my musical career," Tesh continues, "because I wanted the songs to feature myself as a pianist, and a singer, one of the challenges for our arrangers was to include longer instrumental breaks between vocal verses that would allow me to improvise on the piano. The result is that every song is more fun and adventurous than we've usually heard it. Playing these standards this way, especially in a live setting, gives me an opportunity to be challenged in a way that never happens when I'm playing my own music. When you're doing someone else's music and working off fresh charts, you have to get inside that and figure out what the composer and arranger had in mind. The jazz world is different. The dynamics are completely different when I'm working with this kind of musical horsepower behind me, figuring out tempos and swinging in a convincing way. For me, this was really like going back to school. No doubt it will be an ongoing learning process I look forward to for as many years as I decide to do this."

Tesh and his touring ensemble will be performing music from John Tesh Big Band throughout the spring and summer 2012 in various venues across the U.S. "The most interesting part of recording and performing music is that as an artist, you never know how people will use it or the difference it may make in their lives," he says. "It's been rewarding so far seeing people my age, older, and much younger, either rediscovering big band music or hearing it for the first time. The older crowd recalls fond memories of where they were when they first heard it, while the 15-year olds who were raised hearing pre-recorded tracks during live shows can marvel at the brass section playing a triple forte, or the flutes playing pianissimo. These are visceral experiences that we're excited to bring to audiences everywhere via the CD, the public television special and our tour."

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