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The New Gay Channel — Beyond Sexuality?

Wednesday, June 29, 2005

MTV Networks unveils its new gay channel, Logo, on Thursday. According to The New York Times, “While movies will be the digital cable channel’s mainstay, Logo will offer a variety of regular series, featuring travel programs, documentaries, concerts, performances by stand-up comics, sports, reality shows, awards ceremonies and original sitcoms. There will be regular news spots, co-produced with CBS, also owned by Logo’s parent, Viacom.”

The most amazing part of this story is the claim made by Brian Graden, president of Logo and MTV Networks Entertainment: “When you tell a story about gay rodeo or gay surfers it’s not a story about sex nor does it need to be,” he told the paper. “So much connects us beyond sexuality.” That’s a statement most will find hard to take. Sexuality stands at the center of the homosexual culture. Just take a quick look at press coverage from this past Sunday’s Gay Pride celebrations in major American cities. Who does he think he is kidding?

The real fact is that the new network, though programmed for a homosexual audience, will be required to keep explicit sexual content to a minimum, since the channel will be available on regular cable systems. Instead, viewers can look forward to a new series called “First Comes Love,” described by the newspaper as “a comedy makeover show in which the comedian Scott Thompson and a wedding planner help about-to-be-married gay and lesbian couples plan their nuptials in two weeks. Documentaries will feature a variety of gay lives: rugby players, surfers, rural dwellers, Cubans and Republicans.” Don’t accuse them of ducking diversity.

The Logo Web site offers news about coming attractions. Consider “Surfer Girls,” described by this statement: “By weekday these lesbians are doctors, lawyers and realtors, but their weekends are all about the waves.” That is just too much information.

Logo joins Here!, a pay service gay channel started in 2003. Advertisers are lining up for the Logo launch. “There hasn’t been a very efficient way to deliver a sustained message to gays and lesbians,” says Howard Buford, founder of Prime Access, an ad agency specializing in gay and ethnic marketing. He told USA Today, “If there’s a channel dedicated only to redecorating a house or only to preparing food, it seems a channel for gays and lesbians should have preceded that.” Advertisers include Motorola, Miller Lite, and Subaru.

LINKS THAT SUPPOSEDLY DON’T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SEX: Julie Salamon, Logo, A New Gay Channel, Looks ‘Beyond Sexuality’, The New York Times, Tuesday, June 28, 2005; Gary Levin, ‘Underserved’ Viewers Get New Gay Channel, USA Today, Tuesday, June 28, 2005.

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