

sun-sentinel.com/entertainment/stage/sfl-thtalkradionbsep18,0,559270.story

## South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com

### Theater Review: Tei is host with the most in *Talk Radio*

By Mary Damiano

Special Correspondent

September 18, 2007

Barry Champlain hears voices. They come through his headset, and his conversations with them spill out over the airwaves. Barry and his voices have a symbiotic relationship. They love each other, hate each other, but most importantly, feed off each other.

Barry is a radio talk-show host, a shock jock who fills the nighttime airwaves with his own brand of liberalism, patriotism and cynical advice. He is the central character in Eric Bogosian's still-timely 1987 play *Talk Radio*, which enjoyed a recent New York revival and is currently on stage at Plantation's Mosaic Theatre.

As *Talk Radio* opens, Barry (Paul Tei) believes it will be just like every other night on the air. But station manager Dan Woodruff (Dave Corey) ups the ante, telling Barry that a cushy syndication deal is in play; the suits will make their decision based on the show Barry puts on tonight. Barry urges his listeners to call in with juicy material and the audience responds.

Over the course of the broadcast, Barry counsels a pregnant teen, condescends to his regular callers, spars with an anti-Semite and invites a punk-loving fan (Johnny Mineo, in a raucous scene-stealing performance) to be a guest. Barry's colleague Stu (Pete Rogan) and sometime girlfriend Linda (Irene Adjan) have moments in which they address the Mosaic audience, offering insight into Barry's psyche and how he evolved into the abrasive, self-loathing man with a microphone.

The Mosaic Theatre's production is masterful. Director Richard Jay Simon keeps the pace brisk and has assembled a talented team.

The set by Sean McClelland is realistically sleek and officious. Jeff Quinn's lighting design enhances the mood, while Matt Corey's sound is layered and compelling, drenching the action in atmosphere.

A handful of unseen actors — George Schiavone, Noah Levine, Erin Joy Schmidt, Stephanie Simon and Beverly Blanchette — employ various accents to provide the voices of the callers.

But *Talk Radio* belongs to Tei, in a charismatic display of laid-back rage and frenetic energy. His Barry smokes, swigs Jack Daniels and paces the studio like a restless animal that feels both trapped and master of his domain. And Tei is fascinating even when he's not saying a word. It's in these moments of silence



that Tei illustrates the complex, combative soul that lies beneath his character's shock jock exterior.

Mary Damiano is a freelance writer in Wilton Manors.

**On stage**

*Talk Radio*

Comedy-drama, through Oct. 7 at Mosaic Theatre, 12200 W. Broward Blvd., Plantation. Shows 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, 3 p.m. Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday. Tickets \$32. Call 954-577-8243 or visit [mosaictheatre.com](http://mosaictheatre.com).

Copyright © 2007, [South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#)