

# ★ LAS VEGAS ★

## 'SHOWCAST OF THE STARS'

*Mark Tan*  
IN  
**LAS VEGAS**



**MARTY ALLEN TALKS ABOUT THE "NEW COMEDY" OF MIDDLE AMERICA**

Reprinted by Mark Tan/Hollywood Reporter

"I guess you'd have to say that I cover the backbone audiences when it comes to comedy," says bushy haired Marty Allen, the jolly "Hello, Dere" comic who's spent the last three years carving himself a brand new career as a single. Allen's found his niche, mostly by design but with elements of luck, and being in a lot of the right places at a lot of the right times.

"By backbone," says Marty. "I'm talking about the middle-America audience - if you could call that a category - which in reality is the mid-stream of American society. Just putting aside, for the moment, the more-or-less "fringe" audiences that support black humor (the type, not the race), glib intellectual protest comedy, and the so-called slick nightclub humor, what's left is the big majority of nightclub and theater audiences who just want to laugh, at themselves, and have a good time. Sure, we all realize there's humor to be found in all the "revolutions" - political, sexual, social and racial - but there's still that need, through comedy, to just get away from all the pressures."

Allen's wrapped in a bright orange velour robe, coming down as he calls it from his second show at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. His dressing room is relatively calm and quiet, for a change. In the outer room, his wife, Frenchy, is on the phone and greeting backstage visitors. Allen's night is far from over; he still has a radio talk show to do, a 2:15 a.m. opening of his pal Rip Taylor at the Sahara Casbar to attend, and half a dozen "after the show" visits he's promised to make.

Allen's popularity soars incredibly in the television-oriented, non-show business capitals across the country. St. Louis, Dallas, Pittsburgh, Omaha, Indianapolis and New Orleans, to mention just a few of the dozens of cities and towns Marty's played to capacity swells in the past year, are indicative, says Marty, of what really makes America laugh.

"Humor is constantly changing," continues Marty, "but it changes in cycles. What an Archie Bunker can say on television today, or what such greats as Buddy Hackett, Sheky Greene and Don Rickles are doing in clubs now would have been considered shocking five or so years ago. There's much more freedom in comedy now, and it's given those of us in the laugh business, a powerful communication with the people."

"My humor," says Marty "is meant to leave room for what I call 'Non-Message' comedy. I find that most audiences are only willing to cope with so many problems at a time. Today almost all humor is partly topical and satirical, and I try to incorporate some of that into my act, but I think it's time that more comedy went back to just being fun and funny."

Allen's numerous visits to military bases, hospitals and clubs throughout America have convinced him. "Believe him," says a sober Allen, "there's nothing funny about an unending war - either outside or within our country. Politics, a constant source of material, does have a humorous side to it but there's a limit to just how much ridicule and name-calling can be done by a performer. Entertainers should be a unifying force." People who know Marty Allen know he is an intelligent and dedicated man; he takes his responsibilities as a performer and as a citizen seriously. "There's a new brand of comedy coming up," says Marty, "for the so-called masses. And I'm happy to say that it's a positive kind of humor not negative. In my act, I use bits and pieces of political and "problem area" comedy but I hope I'm presenting it fairly, from both sides. What I try to show is that it is so important for all of us to work together. If I have learned one thing in my travels, it's that we must bridge all the gaps that are keeping our people divided - gaps like education, economic, religious, racial and generation."

Part of Allen's current act, now at the Flamingo Hotel.

### ENTERTAINMENT TRIP AROUND THE WORLD



**DICK MCINNES**

SUSAN ST. JAMES really believes in togetherness for her family. Hubby TOM LUCAS makes her up every day for "Mac Millan and Wife" at Universal and she brings her bird, her dog, and her baby daughter, Sunshine with her each day. Rumors are that is the only sunshine there. Seems ROCK HUDSON & Susan's friendship has noticeably cooled.

TRIPPING AROUND. . . . DELLA REESE who just completed hosting "The Mike Douglas Show" for a week by herself (Mike's mother died), was being carefully watched by top network execs who are considering reviving Della's old TV show as a possible mid-season replacement. . . .

JACKIE BISSET & MICHAEL SARRAZIN have just bought the home in Pacific Palisades that CLARK GABLE had built for CAROLE LOMBARD. Lots of romantic memories there. . . . It had to happen, after the smashing success of "Blacula," plans were announced for "Blackenstein" and now SAMMY DAVIS JR. has expressed interest in doing a black "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde". . . . CHEECH & CHONG, the hottest Mexican-Chinese-American comedy act in the business (but then is there another??) impressed on those big spending Texas millionaires so much that they were invited to repeat their nightclub act at one's home and at their usual nightclub fee, I might add. Ah, to be rich.

THEATRE TRIP. . . A very special thanks to VINETTE CARROLL for conceiving and directing and to MICKI GRANT for writing the music and lyrics of "Don't Bother Me, I Can't Cope" which bowed at our Mark Taper Forum. I went there with a cast on my back and a neck brace and was transported way beyond my own problems to a land of pure theatrical delight. I cried I laughed, I enjoyed. More than once I was on my feet applauding and cheering. It's billed as a soul-jazz-gospel musical and hallelujah, it's not all loud blaring music but has lovely ballads some soul stirring gospel and some very definite statements about life in song. It also has PAULA KELLY who is an absolute dream to watch especially in her dance tribute to BILLIE HOLLIDAY and singing "Question," EMILY YANCY, a knock-out singing "So Little Time" and in her duet ("Thank Heaven for You") with

is sub-titled "Bridging the Generation Gap". In addition to a series of hilarious characterizations like a water-logged aquanaut Commander Soggy, a hot pants gay lib presidential candidate, and a right on target working man, Hardhat Joe, Allen plays The Establishment Man opposite his young associate, singer Kevin James. \*

"The overall concept", adds Marty "is to try to show that there need not be such a thing as a generation gap or any kind of gap for that matter if we make the effort to communicate - sometimes through comedy. I try to show audiences everywhere I play that one of the things that makes our country so great is that we can laugh at ourselves and each other - hopefully. Amen!"

### ROWAN & MARTIN AT SAHARA

Laugh-In's dynamic duo, Dan Rowan & Dick Martin, return to Del Webb's Sahara and this time they have brought with them lovely vocalist Gloria Loring.

Now in their 21st yr., as a working comedy team, Rowan & Martin are a study in perfection. For to watch them at work is to see the personification of

comedy interchange; a unison effort to etch a mood and create a collective characterization -- as opposed to two men merely delivering a string of jokes.

Their very popular television series, "Laugh-In," which was born from a one-hour special went on the air as a regular series in January 1968 -- and it's still going strong.

talented GEORGE TURNER, ALAN WEEKS, so strong singing "My Name is Man" plus a terrific cast including AMANDA AMBROSE, WINSTON HEMSLEY, MARGUERITE DELAIN, JACQUELYN DUBOIS, MYRNA WHITE, HANNAH DEAN, ISAIAH JONES, JULIET JONES, BILLY KING, BOBBY KING & BRAD MANUEL. "Cope" deserves any awards it gets and by the way, Las Vegas, its a natural for you.

NEW TV TRIP. . . JULIE ANDREWS so far is the undisputed champ. What a gassy show!! If the rest are like the first show, it's sure winner. . . . "Maude" starring BEATRICE ARTHUR also a winner. Her delivery is worth the show. . . . "The Waltons" is lovely, warm family show and it's a welcome relief. First show was super albeit a little reminiscement of some others. RICHARD THOMAS will become a teen idol from it. . . PAUL LYNDE who is easily one of the funniest men in the world is in the wrong show. I just can't accept him as the father of two girls. The format is wrong but HE'S right on and the first ratings showed him clobbering CAROL BURNETT whose first show was disappointing but as all we BURNETT fans know her shows always get better. More on the new TV season next week.

The Screen Smart Set held their monthly luncheon at the Bel Air Country Club and it was nice to see some familiar faces who should be working more. 80 year old BEULAH BONDI refusing the fattening dessert saying "I've got to watch my figure," MARY ANDERSON lovely as ever and interested in coming back to films, TRUDY MARSHALL happy over daughter DEBBIE RAFFIN being signed for a lead in "Forty Carats," PATTI & MAXINE ANDREWS (Patti talked to me about doing a TV special on "Victory Canteen" a spoof of the forties), and gorgeous PAMELA RODGERS trying to shed her "Laugh In" image. FLORENCE MARLY & JOHN PERKINS BARRY MORE entertained and they were good, I especially liked Florence's very sexy "Songs for Women in Love."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO: WALTER PIDGEON MICKEY ROONEY (Joe Yule, Jr.) & ROMY SCHNEIDER (23); JOHN ERICSON, JULIET PROWSE & ALDO RAY (Aldo Dare) (25); JULIE LONDON (Julie Peck) & PATRICK ONEAL (26); CLAUDE JARMAN JR. & JAYNE MEADOWS (27) PETER FINCH & ARNOLD STANG (28) GENE AUTRY, VIRGINIA BRUCE, ANITA EKBERG, STEVE FORREST, GREER GARSON, TREVOR HOWARD & BRENDA MARSHALL (Ardis Gaines) (29).

Make every minute count this week. Try it you'll like it.

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