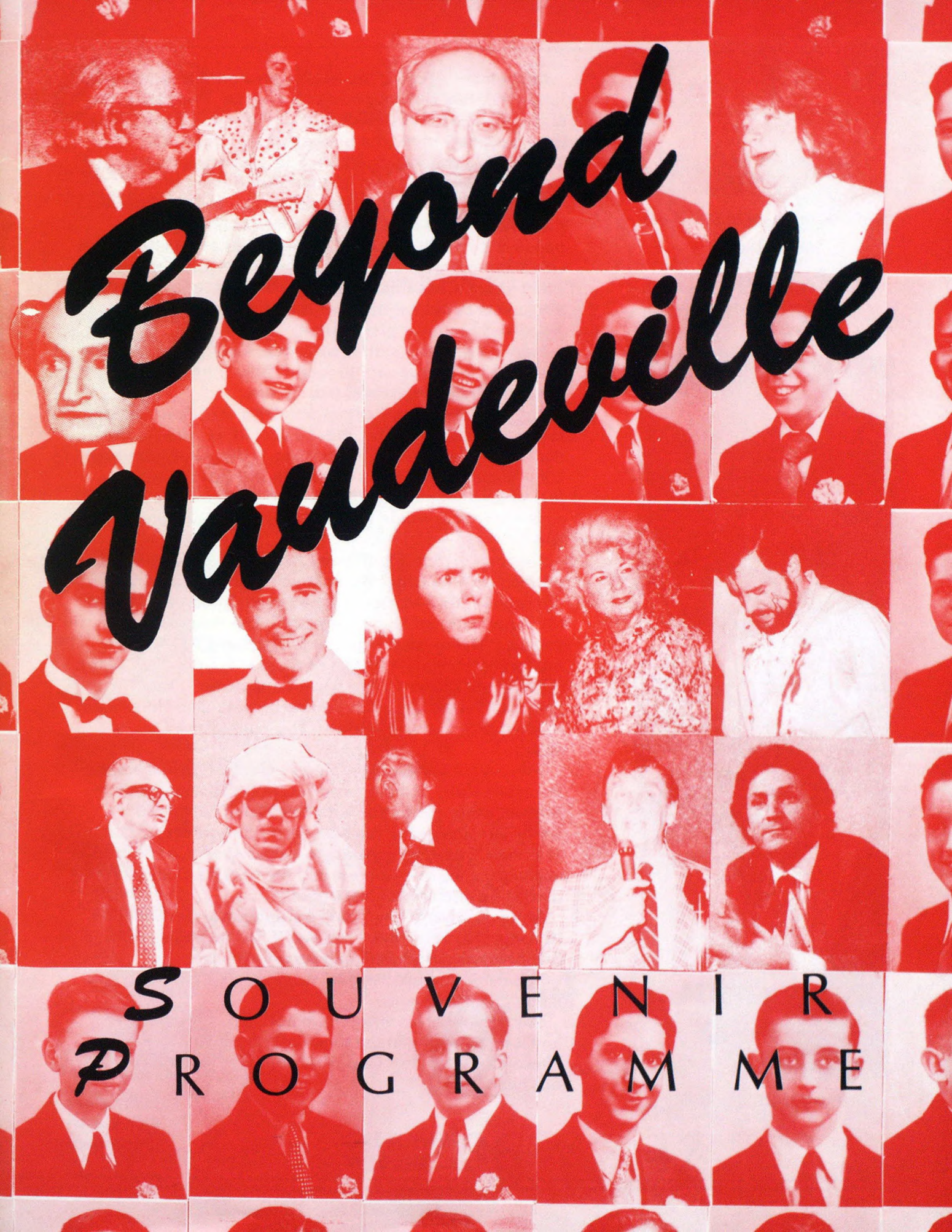

Beyond Vaudeville
SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

"I can't remember if I cried,
when I read about his widowed
bride. Something touched me
deep inside,
the day the music died."
—Don McLean



Happier times: Roy Radin

I remember opening the newspapers on that morning in June, 1983, and realizing it was all a big lie. The police, the press, show business, all of them. In a web of fabrications, they conspired to tell the public that Roy Radin, the 33-year-old theatrical producer, had died mysteriously, and had lived a life filled with tranquilizers and cocaine.

It was no different from the despicable way they treated him when he was alive. At his Southampton mansion, a police raid in 1980 supposedly discovered a sexually explicit videotape starring Radin, and a number of photographs of a half-naked woman in a Nazi cap. The raid followed allegations by actress Melonie Haller that she had been raped and beaten at his mansion.

Even if the horror stories were true—and, I contend, they were not—it is important to forget these things and respect the man for the impresario that he was.

On July 9, 1981, Mr. Radin produced a live show that was to alter my vision of what theatre should be. Held in the decrepit, mildewed Calderone Concert Hall in Hempstead, Long Island, "Roy Radin's Vaudeville '81" left me aghast. Just when it seemed I had witnessed the act of the century, a new spectacle would come on and upstage its predecessor.

The line-up that evening was as follows: Santini Demon ("Direct from Holland, the Emperor of the Inferno"), John Carradine ("Your Master of Ceremonies"), Barbara McNair ("A Super Talented Singing Beauty"), The Harmonica Rascals ("The Musical Masters of Mirth and Merriment"), Jud Strunk ("The Will Rogers of the 80s"), Zippy the Chimp ("The World's Most Celebrated Chimpanzee"), Tiny Tim ("A Singer of Serious Songs"), Johnny Brown ("The Little Giant of Rhythm"), and Jan Murray ("The Comedian's Comedian").

There were technical problems that night, just as there are at any show. But the performers on that stage embodied showmanship, giving the audiences good old-fashioned family fare and giving the best damned show they could. I still recall Carradine's reading of Edgar Allen Poe, despite a malfunctioning microphone and the heckles of an audience consisting primarily of black youths.

And I recall Tiny Tim, doing a striptease and writhing as he sang, "Do You Think I'm Sexy." I had no choice from that point on; Vaudeville had become my life.

The work we do at *Beyond Vaudeville* is a tribute to Roy Radin and his dream.

Roy Radin and his vision have not died. They are alive and well and living in the theatrical presentations entitled, "Beyond Vaudeville." God bless you, Roy, you're always in our hearts.

Sincerely,
Rich Brown
Impresario

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Special Thanks to Chuck Barris, The Brokerage Pub, The Downstair's Lounge, Enrique the Elevator Operator, Dick Falk, Joe Franklin, Ted Mack, Richard Roffman, John Walsh, and All the Little People.

Spring 1987
Plague Vol. 10, Issue 2

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Stryker

BEYOND VAUDEVILLE I

Beyond Vaudeville is, quite simply, the product of a young man with a dream. The young man was Richard Brown, an editor of *The Plague*, The NYU humor magazine, and his dream was to create a variety show featuring the most unusual acts he could find. In 1981, Brown had seen a show entitled *Roy Radin's Vaudeville*, named after the show's producer, **Roy Radin**, who has since been brutally murdered. The show featured some of the most bizarre acts he had ever seen, such as **Tiny Tim** undulating on the floor of the stage while playing a ukelele, and the umpteenth comeback of **Pinky Lee**, who once had a popular television show in the 50's. The show also featured performances by **Zippy The Chimp**, **Jan Murray**, and horror film icon **John Carradine**. The show was unlike any show Brown had ever seen, and it gave him the idea to create his own variety show, a show even more unusual and bizarre, if that was possible. Brown decided that the show would be called *Beyond Vaudeville*, in tribute to *Roy Radin's Vaudeville*, and he quickly set out to find performers to participate in it.

A frequent patron of the various nightspots and lounges on Long Island, Brown believed that these were the best places to begin his search. For the first *Beyond Vaudeville*, he found only one worthy performer—**Stryker**, a lounge singer who composed his own songs, many of them about Long Island life. Brown would find many more performers at these nightspots for future *Beyond Vaudeville* shows. Next, an ad was placed in the now-defunct *Soho News*, and many unusual performers responded. The performers were so weird, in fact, that Richard Brown chose to use a pseudonym, calling himself "Noodles Tailor." Some performers were discovered doing their acts on the street and one of the performers signed, **David Greene**, was a member of *The Plague*, a co-sponsor of the show with the NYU Program Board. The Program Board found some performers for the show also, and on Saturday, March 20th, 1982, the dream of Richard Brown became a reality.

The show was held in the Eisner and Lubin Auditorium of Loeb Student Center, and there wasn't an empty seat in the house. The host of the show was **Hugh Fink**, an NYU student and a DJ at WNYU radio. He was accompanied by the "Hugh Fink Orchestra," a group of men and one woman dressed in dark suits and dark glasses acting as bogus security guards. Fink, also a stand up comedian, first went out into the audience, talking to various people and asking them

why they were there. Then, Fink introduced the first act, Stryker. Stryker took the stage and started with the theme song from *Fame*, substituting his own name for the word "Fame." Stryker had to sing accapella because he couldn't find anyone to play the piano for him while he performed. Then, Stryker sang a couple of his own songs and, after introducing a couple in the audience who were celebrating an anniversary, he dedicated his song "Always Be Lovers" to them, a song influenced by the actress **Joan Blondell**. At the conclusion of "Always Be Lovers," Stryker was escorted off the stage by the menacing looking security guards.

Numerous acts followed Stryker, and they included **A.K.A.**, a rock musician savagely ridiculed by Hugh Fink, **Ed Rollin**, another rock musician, and **Rob Harari**, a pianist. Next up was **Joseph Erdelyi, Jr.**, an elderly man who dressed like Uncle Sam. Mr. Erdelyi performed his deeply moving "John Lennon Requiem," and, at the end of the performance, there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Soon following was the performance of **Herb Cooper**, a *Plague* member, who sang "New York, New York." In the middle of the song, an audience member jumped up to the stage and pulled out a gun, shooting Cooper. It was a joke, however, and the audience laughed heartily. Then came **Ben Brody**, a 13 year old comedian who did a stand up act telling some hilariously filthy jokes. David Greene, who was to go on next, sat on a couch at the rear of the stage and provided Ben's "laugh track"—laughing loudly at every joke Ben told. Then it was time for Greene's "Thomas Paine," an act that would become a staple at future *Beyond Vaudeville* shows. In the "Thomas Paine" act, Greene builds tension in his body, then releases it by screaming and writhing in pain on the floor. Fink's security guards, however, misunderstood the act and immediately dragged Greene backstage. Greene's screams could still be heard as Hugh Fink introduced the next act. Other acts following were **Dean Zerbe**, who had food dumped on his head while a man played the piano; **Cinti Laird**, who had smoke bombs thrown at her in the middle of her act. The final two acts consisted of "**The Vault**," a punk rock group who were overheard threatening the life of host Hugh Fink because they disliked him so much, and **Andy Friedman**, a magician. By the end of the show, there were very few audience members left, but the few that were there were happy because they knew that they had just witnessed a remarkable event in the world of entertainment.

Beyond Vaudeville I holds the record for having the longest



Joe Erdelyi takes a break





Lizalotta

time length of any *Vaudeville* show—approximately four hours. But Richard Brown and his fellow organizers didn't care, they had put together an amazing show, and were proud of their work. Stryker and David Greene have performed in every *Beyond Vaudeville* show since, and are scheduled to appear in "*Beyond Vaudeville VI.*" Joseph Erdelyi, Jr. has appeared in *Beyond Vaudevilles III* and *V.* And many more performers were yet to be discovered for future shows. On March 20th, 1982, a new era had begun.

—Bob Young



BEYOND VAUDEVILLE II

In the summer of 1982, David Greene, who performs the "Thomas Paine" act, suggested to Richard Brown and other members of *The Plague* that there should be a *Beyond Vaudeville II*—the show was worth another try. It wasn't long before Brown and the rest of the *Plague* crew agreed that another "*Beyond Vaudeville*" would indeed be worth another try, and planning began. It was agreed that *Beyond Vaudeville II* would take place the following spring, and that the *Plague* would be the sole sponsor of the show. It was no secret that the *Plague* members were unhappy with the way the NYU Program Board helped put together the first show. The Program Board misunderstood the true aim of the show—to present bizarre and unusual acts. They booked mainstream acts, such as a folk singer and a **Diana Ross** clone, that didn't fit in with the overall concept of the show. Without the input of the Program Board, Richard Brown and *The Plague* would be free to choose all their own acts. Also, something wonderful happened: The managers of the now defunct dance club **Danceteria** had agreed to let *The Plague* use the club as the venue for *Beyond Vaudeville II*. Unfortunately, the club later backed out of the deal because of "creative differences."

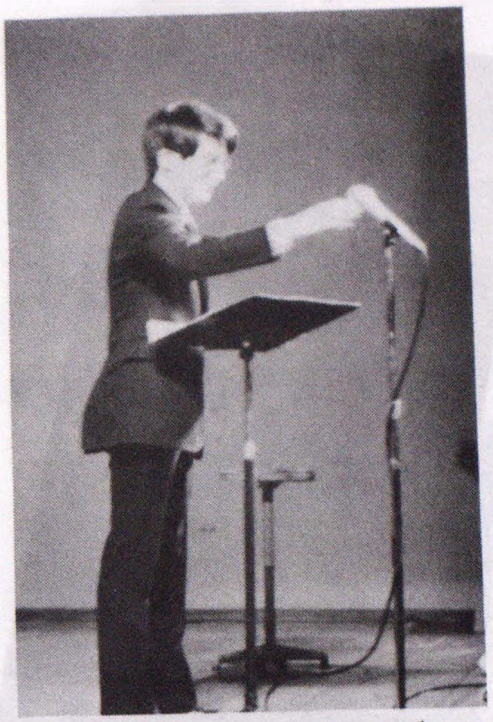
Early in 1983, the *Plague* staff quickly got to work on putting together *Beyond Vaudeville II*. Another venue for the show was booked—Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, the same one as last year. The next step was deciding who would appear in the show. It was quickly agreed upon that **Stryker** and **David Greene** would be asked back, but the rest of the

acts would all have to be new. Richard Brown went to the same club where he discovered Stryker, the Downstairs Lounge in the Rockville Holiday Inn. Some of the acts for the new show would be discovered there, and other acts were discovered by Brown on the street. He discovered a street singer and a philosopher, who happened to be standing in the middle of a crowd with Brown, and struck up a conversation.

Now, the most important decision was yet to take place. The show needed a new host. The first show's host, **Hugh Fink**, was considered to be too abrasive, and he was disliked by many of the acts. *Beyond Vaudeville II* needed a host who would be liked by both audience and performers. The decision was soon made: the new host would be **Frank Moshman**. Who was Frank Moshman? Frank Moshman was a computer student at NYU who was friendly with some *Plague* members. He was the complete opposite of Hugh Fink. Moshman had a friendly, gentle personality, and though he had no performing experience, he was extremely eager to accept the job as host. With this final bit of business decided, "*Beyond Vaudeville II*" was ready to go.

It was on a Wednesday night in April, 1983, that *Beyond Vaudeville II* took place. There were a good number of people in the audience, but not quite as many as there were at the first show. The show started as Richard Brown took the stage and began a new *Beyond Vaudeville* tradition by "singing" the names of all the performers in the show while playing the ukelele. Then, he introduced Frank Moshman, who immediately won over the crowd by telling a few jokes. Frank then introduced the first act, **Mary Samford**, an elderly street singer and happy-go-lucky bag woman who Brown discovered on St. Mark's Place. Mary sang a few old folk songs, and had the audience singing along with her. She was wearing a derby-like hat that most of the audience members thought looked pretty silly. Next up was **Lizalotta Valeska**, a former Miss Finland who was now 82 years old and was at the show to perform her own amazing aerobic workout. Lizalotta, wearing a leotard, demonstrated her various exercises to the applauding audience. After completing her act, Lizalotta told the crowd, "Remember, I'm over 80, too!" She was greeted with even more applause, and then announced that she had brought copies of her book on exercise, and wished to sell them to members of the audience. Frank Moshman was among the first to buy her book.

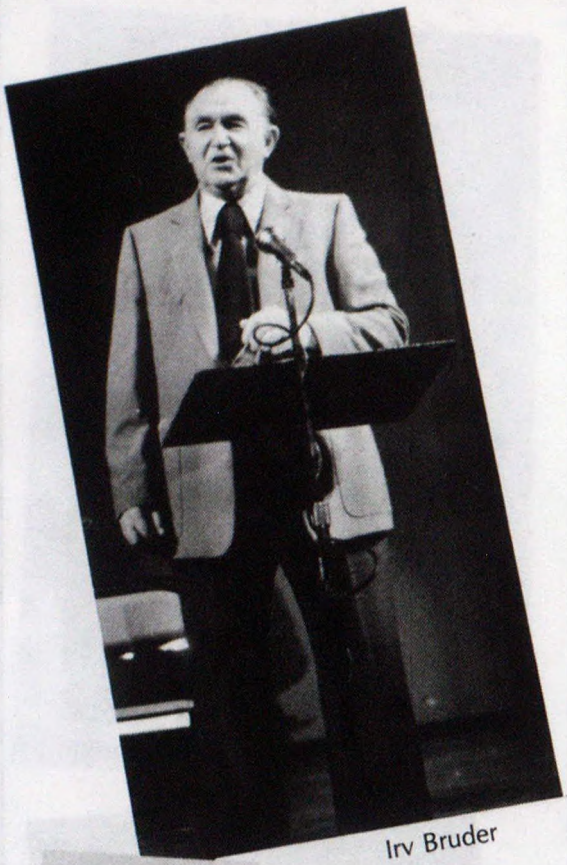
Soon, Frank introduced the next act—**Stryker**. The crowd applauded wildly; it was obvious that Stryker was the man



Frank Moshman



happy-go-lucky



Irv Bruder



Mr. Feldman



everybody came to see. When Stryker took the stage, he launched into his much beloved version of "Fame," followed by rousing versions of "Long Island Has Everything," "Jones Beach Is The Greatest," and "Always Be Lovers." Stryker was followed by another incredible singer, middle-aged **Irv Bruder**, discovered at the Downstairs Lounge. *Beyond Vaudeville II* marks Bruder's only *B.V.* appearance to date. Bruder launched into a barn-burning medley of songs from *Oklahoma*, and prompted the audience to sing the title song along with him. Next up was a man who was soon to become a Beyond Vaudeville legend. His name was **Mr. Joseph Feldman**, a "stand-up" philosopher, discovered by Richard Brown in the street. An elderly man, he electrified the crowd with his incredible philosophical discussion. (His entire speech is printed verbatim in this issue.) After the speech, Mr. Feldman conducted a question and answer period with the audience, but couldn't see the people who were raising their hands to ask questions because the stage lights were in his eyes. Music followed with the debut of another *B.V.* legend, the great **Bert Bedell**. Mr. Bedell, whose singing style is modeled after the "early" **Sinatra**, drove the crowd wild with his stylish renditions of songs from the 40's. The return of David Greene followed Mr. Bedell. Greene's horrifying "Thomas Paine" act went off well, now that the audience was able to see the *entire* act. At the first *B.V.*, Greene was dragged off the stage by Hugh Fink's security guards at the beginning of his act. This time, Greene sat in a chair placed in the middle of the empty stage. He soon fell off it, however, and writhed in pain on the floor, all to the delight and terror of the audience. The final scheduled act of the evening followed "Thomas Paine," the *B.V.* debut of one of the most beloved couples in show business, **John and Irene Weidenburner**, discovered at the Downstairs Lounge. Irene, also known as the "Gong Show Queen of Long Island," was a singer, and John, a comedian and singer. Irene wowed the audience with a medley of saucy numbers, including "On The Good Ship Lollipop," and "Oh, Johnny." John told some off-color jokes, which had the audience rolling in the aisles, and then John and Irene combined their talents to perform the haunting song "If I Loved You" from *Carousel*. At the end of the song, there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

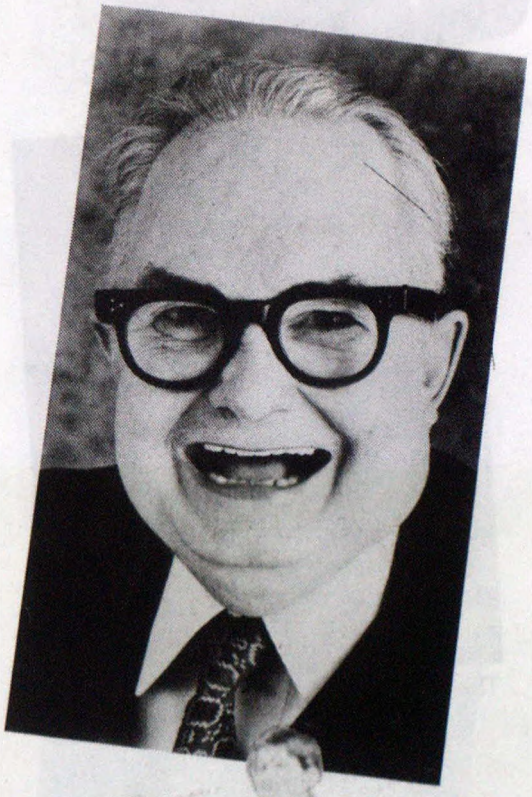
Finally, the show was over. Frank thanked the audience for coming. After he had done this, a member of the audience came up to the stage and asked if he could sing a song. Frank said he could. The audience member was **Lawrence Kruger**, a friend of the *Plague* members and an employee

of NYU's Student Activities Annex. Kruger sang a beautiful rendition of "Danny Boy," and there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Now, the show was finally over, and it was a rousing success. Richard Brown and the *Plague* members left the auditorium happily dreaming about next year.

Purists claim that *Beyond Vaudeville II* was the first *true* Beyond Vaudeville show because it was produced solely by the *Plague* and was produced in a fashion that all future shows would copy. A number of regulars made their debuts in *B.V. II*, Mr. Feldman, John and Irene, and Bert Bedell. With Stryker and David Greene, this entire group would soon be making history.

—Bob Young





BEYOND VAUDEVILLE III

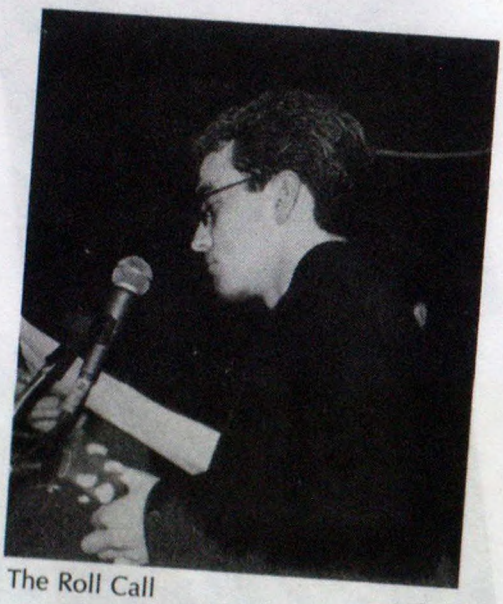
If *Beyond Vaudeville II* provided a glimpse of what the show could be, *Beyond Vaudeville III* definitely established it as a yearly institution. For the first time, the show would be preserved on videotape, and a professional audio recording made in the hope of producing a record. After *B.V. II*, it was decided that the show might lend itself to a more intimate arena. the obvious location was the NYU Pub, then the Loeb Student Center's bar/restaurant.

The next order of business was to settle on a host. For the first time, some consideration was given to a non-NYU personality. In the fall of 1983, **Larry "Bud" Melman** of NBC's *Late Night with David Letterman* had given an exclusive interview to *The Plague*. There was much hope that he could be persuaded to host its stage show as well. As negotiations proved difficult, *Plague* members looked back fondly at the job gentle, diminutive **Frank Moshman** had done the previous year. He had earned a second chance. Frank thought so, too, and he agreed to reprise his role, the only star in the six-year history of the show to host it twice.



Now that that question had been settled, the lineup had to be firmed up. *B.V.* said good-bye to three acts from the previous year. **Mary Samford** used up all of the good will she had in reserve by loudly demanding in the lobby of NYU's Student Activities Office that immediate payment for her performance be drawn, even though it had been explained to all that the checks required a few days to be processed. Two *Plague* members were then forced to walk to her avenue D apartment to deliver her check. She would





The Roll Call



Anthony Thomas

not be back. **Lizalotta Valeska's** exercise program, while fascinating once, was deemed not interesting enough for a repeat engagement. **Irv Bruder** had other commitments. In their places were three new performers: a ventriloquist discovered while insulting passersby in Times Square, an 11-year-old comedian, and a poet.

The show began late, and whether because of the two recording processes or the bar, disorganization seemed to be the order of the night. The Pub was nearly full, including many guests of the performers, and patrons of the bar who were unaware of the night of stars about to unfold. The 11-year-old comic, **Gerry Schwartz**, annoyed several members of *The Plague* staff by almost single-handedly devouring the *hors d'oeuvers* that had been meant for the entire organizing staff. Perhaps this contributed to the anticipatory, yet decidedly rowdy atmosphere that hung in the room as **Rich Brown** sang the "roll call" for the second year and Frank took the stage to the cries of "Mosh-man, Mosh-man." He again warmed up the crowd with a few jokes, but, although it was appreciative, seemed to have mischief on its mind.

Stryker resumed his lead-off role from the first *B.V.*, with much the same set of songs. However, Stryker did show a deft sense of how to use the cabaret setting, bringing a little girl from Gerry Schwartz's table, "Debbie from Woodmere," up on the stage during the song "Long Island Has Everything." He added a line saying that she was one of the things Long Island had, and the audience ate it up. Stryker also gained from the new accompanist, **Bob Kline**, a master of the keyboard. All the acts were amazed at his precision, without any rehearsal. The jolly Kline would be a staple of all the subsequent shows.

The next act was **Anthony Thomas**, the Times Square ventriloquist. All were bowled over by his indoor debut. The noise in the room was constant, annoying especially the next act, **Max Sofsky**. Everyone roared when Thomas's dummy turned to Sofsky and said "Hey, man, you got a headache?" as Sofsky held his head in his hands, oblivious to the question. Finally, he realized he was being spoken to, waved and nodded, but he did not answer.

Max Sofsky had other problems besides the noise. The lights for the videotape hurt his eyes, so he performed with his back to the audience. Then, as he read, he failed to speak into the microphone, so almost no one heard his Robert Burns tribute "Ode to a Mouse." Sofsky, who had previously written for **Tiny Tim**, was also disturbed to learn of **Mr. Feldman's** participation, as they apparently had a run-in over

some allegedly stolen law library books some years before. As a professional, however, he went on.

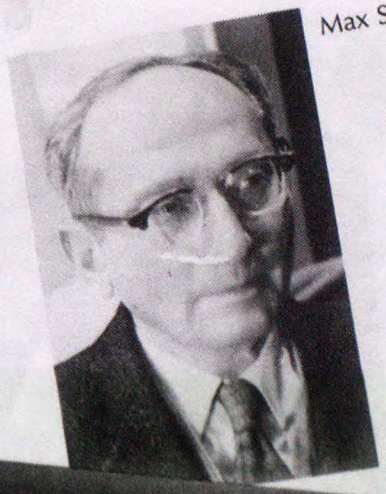
Next up was **Joseph Erdelyi Jr.**, in a much lighter vein than his appearance two years earlier. He sang several original political campaign songs in his Uncle Sam costume, including the world premiere of "All the Way With Mondale," "Let Ron Do It," and "All the Way With Carter and Mondale." Then, the hungry Gerry Schwartz had the audience, by now dominated by members of his family, in stitches, ably filling the shoes of **Ben Brody** in *B.V. I*, reading several ethnic and "blue" jokes from a black looseleaf notebook.

Meanwhile, as the audience shrank and the rowdiness grew, a crisis was brewing. Frank Moshman, no fan of noise under any circumstances, and especially so when he was trying to announce the guests, threatened to walk out if the crowd was not better behaved. He felt it was not right to have to preface each introduction with demands to "shutup." The lovable, kind host of the year before had become a tiger. He was convinced to finish the show, but his lack of experience dealing with a difficult audience and its ability to unnerve him damaged his future as the show's host. In fact, he has not attended another *B.V.* since.

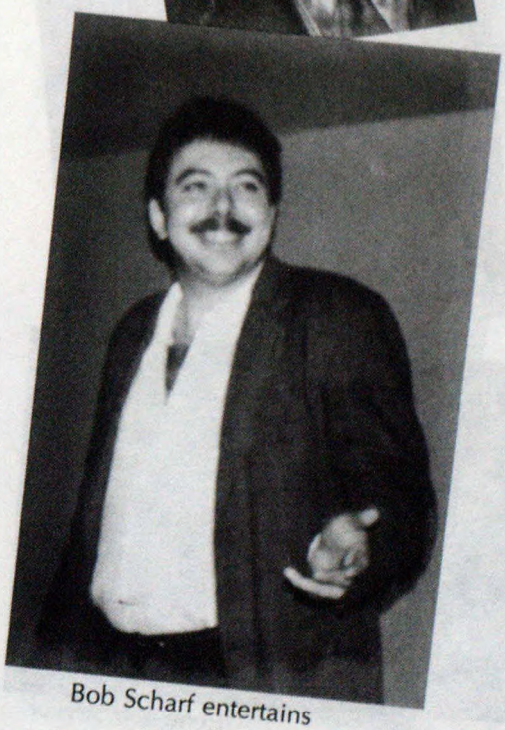
However, Frank was all smiles when he introduced **David Greene** as "a personal friend of mine." While most people, he said, "say [PI]r[s2]," Dave says "[PI]r round." When "Thomas Paine" had been performed, and Dave had been carried off while Bob Kline played "That's Entertainment," there was little hope of controlling the crowd. **Bert Bedell** and **Irene and her Husband** gamely went on, but few were in a condition to appreciate them or gain anything from Mr. Feldman's remarks. Mr. Feldman had been slated to debate the question of the existence of God with **Bob Scharf**, NYU philosophy grad extraordinaire. When Scharf was forced to cancel, Mr. Feldman boldly picked up on the theme alone, but his wisdom fell largely on deaf ears.

As **Larry Kruger** had a year before, audience members were inspired to share their gifts with the rest of the audience. "Our next guest will eat fire," Frank announced as a man called **"Ramblin' Bob"** took the stage to extinguish a match in his mouth. A man imbibing at the bar told a joke. Then, Stryker asked to reprise "There's Gonna Be No Gongs Tonight ('Cause Stryker's Gonna Do It Up Right)" for the video camera for possible MTV airplay at some future date. As Irene removed talent-show and bowling trophies from a bag, all who were of a mind to took the stage and danced and swayed to the gleeful tune. With that, the show was over.





Max Sofsky



Bob Scharf entertains


Mason


Dee Nack


Irene and Stryker

Beyond Vaudeville had firmly established its identity. The members of *The Plague* expected only bigger and better things in the years to come.

—Steve Korn

BEYOND VAUDEVILLE IV

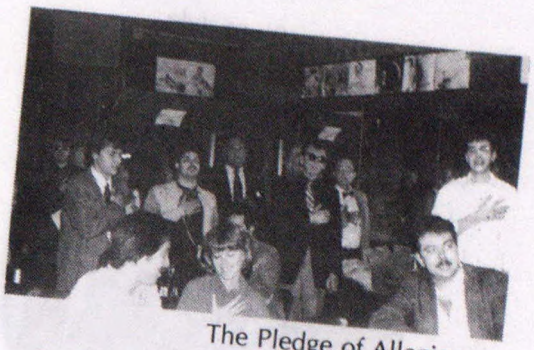
At the beginning of 1985, Richard Brown and the rest of the members of *The Plague* sat down to plan *Beyond Vaudeville IV* which would, once again, be held in the spring. The greatest concern of everyone involved was the question of who would be this year's host. It was mutually decided that *B.V. IV's* host would be a celebrity. The show needed a hook to lure in more audience members, and the presence of a celebrity would do just that, in addition to helping the show garner some media attention. Who would the host be? That was a tough question to answer. *Beyond Vaudeville IV* needed somebody special, someone who would appeal to the people who were usually attracted to the *Beyond Vaudeville* shows. As fate would have it, an item about former child star **Mason Reese** was printed on Page Six of The *New York Post* shortly after the first meeting of the organizers. The item said that Reese had been attacked by a bouncer at the **Limelight** disco without provocation, and a law suit was being filed by Reese's attorney against the club. A number of *Plague* members saw the item, including Richard Brown, who thought to himself, "Wouldn't it be great to have Mason Reese as our host?" Brown immediately contacted Reese's attorney, whose name was printed in the news item, and asked the man where he could get in touch with Mason. The attorney gave Brown Reese's phone number. Brown contacted Mason and told him about the show. A delighted Mason Reese said "Yes! I will do the show!"

Now that a major celebrity had been signed as host, the next problem was finding a venue for the show. Eisner and Lubin Auditorium, which had housed the first two *Beyond Vaudeville* shows, was booked solid for the entire spring. One of the organizers, John Walsh, managed to secure a performance room in the Press Building, a building on the NYU campus, which was small, but perfect for the show. This out of the way, the next step was to book the performers. **Stryker, David Greene, Bert Bedell, John and Irene Weidenburner** and **Mr. Feldman** were all invited back, but there were still a number of slots open for new performers. It didn't take long before three street singers, an **Elvis** impersonator,

a rock and roll singer, an an "emoter" were discovered and signed. A week before the show was to take place, everything seemed to be all set. A video crew had even been hired to tape the event. Then something happened that made everyone question whether the show would actually go off as planned.

The room in Press Building where *Beyond Vaudeville IV* had been scheduled to take place was suddenly taken away due to scheduling mix-ups. With less than a week before the show, where would the *Beyond Vaudeville* organizers find another venue? A major search to find a new room proved futile. Then, John Walsh remembered something. He remembered an ad he had seen for the folk music club called **Speakeasy**, located on MacDougal Street, saying that the club could be booked by organizations wanting to put on shows. Walsh, Brown, and the rest of the organizers immediately trotted down to Speakeasy and made a quick deal to secure the club for Thursday, April 18th. The show would go on!

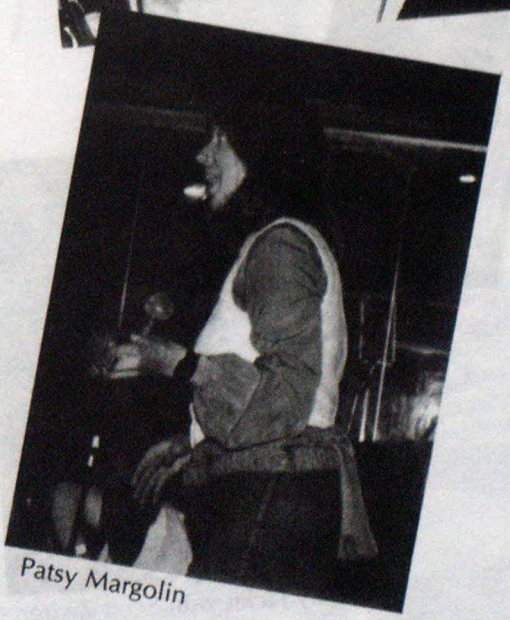
The night of April 18th proved to be a magical one. Speakeasy was a perfect place to hold the show. Though the club specialized in showcasing folk music acts, it looked more like a Holiday Inn cocktail lounge, the type of setting where many of the acts had been discovered. The club was completely sold out and **Scott Zwiren**, a *Plague* member, was hired as a security guard to keep the crowd in line. **Bob Kline**, a versatile piano player, was again the accompaniest. The show started with John Walsh leading the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. Then, Richard Brown came out and sang the traditional "roll call" of acts, and this was followed by the moment everybody was waiting for: the appearance of Mason Reese. The crowd went wild as Mason took the stage. Mason told a number of hilarious jokes as part of his opening monologue. Then, he introduced the first act—Stryker, of course. Stryker drove the crowd in a frenzy with his devastating version of "Fame." He next debuted his lovely new song "The Time To Be Happy Is Now." If that weren't enough, Stryker sang his hit song "No Gongs Tonight," and invited the audience to dance with him on stage as he sang. Irene Weidenburner came up with many trophies that Stryker had won over the years, and displayed them to the crowd. David Greene came up and performed his patented "point dance." **Eunice Taylor**, a middle-aged woman, who would be performing later in the show, joined everyone on stage and boogied down with Stryker. As Stryker concluded his act and stepped off stage, Mason introduced



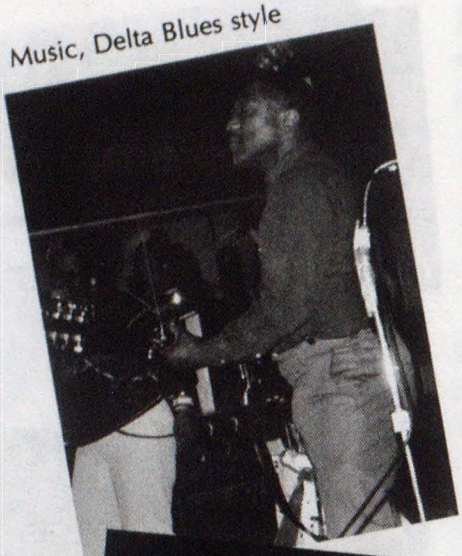
The Pledge of Allegiance

Eunice Taylor





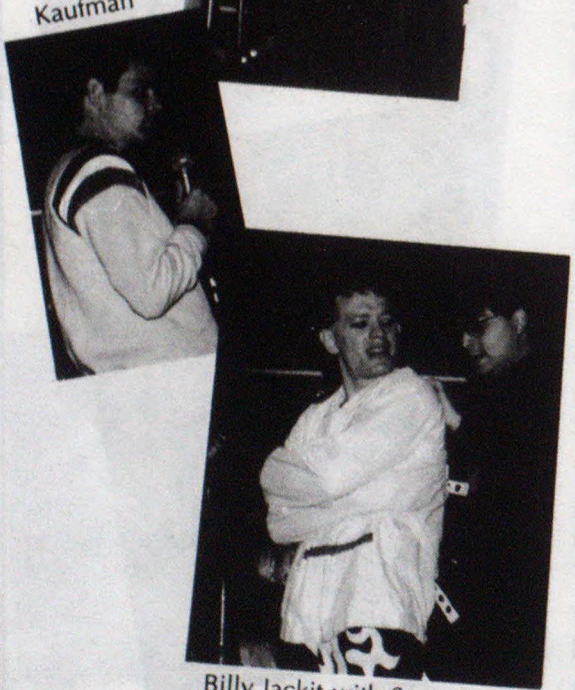
Patsy Margolin



Music, Delta Blues style



Millie Budwal reads her music



Michael Kaufman

Billy Jackit with Scott Zwiren

the next act. **Patsy Margolin**. Patsy, a streetsinger, sang a song about Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street, and asked the audience to sing along with her. Then, Patsy pulled out a marionette-type puppet she called "Clarence Clearwater Survival" and made him dance on a wooden board placed between her legs while she sang a **Pete Seeger**-like folk tune. The next act up was **Delta Blues**, who, as he stepped up to the stage, angrily, said, "I ain't doing *shit*, till you give another hand to Stryker!" The audience applauded. Blues, a gritty blues belter and guitar player, influenced by the Chicago Blues style, was joined by Eunice Taylor, previously seen dancing with Stryker, who said that she "sings the blues the way I feels." After a few scorching blues numbers, Eunice gave the crowd a wonderful bit of advice: "Do whatever you want to do in life, but remember, be *good* at it."

Lance Venture, a self-styled "emoter," was the next act up. Venture acted out the words to "I Want To Know What Love Is," without lipsynching to them. Halfway through the act, Venture injured himself by banging his head against the stage wall, but completed the act with blood streaming from his forehead. Next up was unquestionably the worst act ever to appear at *Beyond Vaudeville*, **Mildred E. Budwal**. A whale of a woman, Budwal, who was discovered on the street, sang a medley of songs from the musical *South Pacific*. These happy songs sounded like a funeral dirge coming from Budwal. To make matters worse, Budwal couldn't keep up with the piano, claiming that she had never sang with any musical backing before. It was quite a relief to the sickened audience members when Budwal left the stage. Luckily, David Greene's "Thomas Paine" was the next act. Greene once again built up tension in his head, then writhed in pain on the floor. Unfortunately, Greene knocked over some microphones while performing his act, causing damage to the mics and inconveniencing some of the acts yet to come. **Bert Bedell** came up next, putting the audience in a great mood as he sang "Saturday Night Is The Loneliest Night Of The Week," along with other 40's classics. The "B.V." debut of female Elvis impersonator **Dee Nack** was next. The voluptuous Ms. Nack made the audience believe she was **Elvis Presley**, her impersonation was that good. Acts following were the gifted comedian **Michael Kaufman**, and **Billy Jackit**, a Billy Idol look-a-like who sang rock-and-roll songs. Jackit came to the stage wearing a straight-jacket and had to have it removed by Scott Zwiren before performing. Finally, the much beloved John and Irene made their third "*B.V.*" appearance. Irene sang her "saucy" numbers, John told his "rude,

but not crude" jokes, and together they sang "If I Loved You." There wasn't a dry eye in the house at the conclusion of the song. Mr. Feldman, also making his third "*B.V.*" appearance, was the final act. Earlier in the evening, the rude waitresses in Speakeasy tried to force Mr. Feldman to buy drinks, due to the two drink minimum placed on each table. Mr. Feldman sternly told them, "I am a performer! I do not buy drinks." The waitresses left him alone. The stand-up philosopher engaged the crowd in a thoughtful discussion on the word "fallacy."

Mason thanked the audience for coming, and the show was over. *Beyond Vaudeville IV* had been the most successful show so far. Due to the ten minute time constraints on each act, the show went smoothly and finished on time. Very few people walked out. Everyone involved with *Beyond Vaudeville* dreamed about the show being even bigger and better next year.

—Bob Young



The Philosopher at work

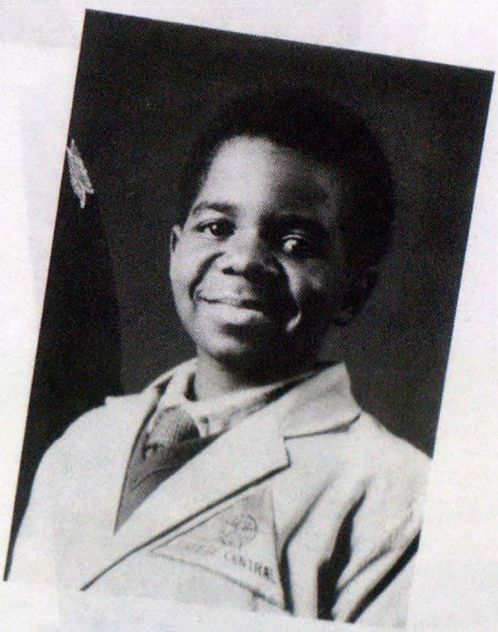
BEYOND VAUDEVILLE V

After the rousing success of *Beyond Vaudeville IV*, the producers could not wait to create *Beyond Vaudeville V*. The question was, 'Who could fill the shoes of **Mason Reese**?' Who? Who? Who? **Frank Moshman** was nowhere to be found. **Hugh Fink**, last they had heard, was busy playing his violin at birthday parties at such Beverly Hills locales as **Gary Coleman**'s estate.

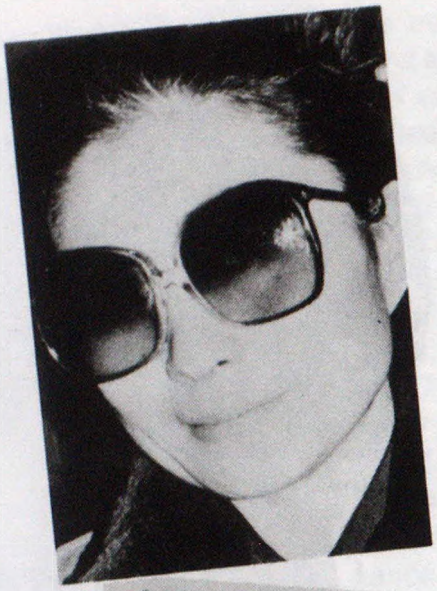
The choice was obvious: **Quentin Crisp**. Unfortunately, the Naked Civil Servant was, in his words, "Dubious." If the producers could find no one else, he said, he would agree to emcee. But Mr. Crisp's presence was not necessary, because the heavens smiled down on *Beyond Vaudeville* in the form of a *National Enquirer* story on former child star **Danny Bonaduce**, the *real* star of TV's *The Partridge Family*.

Mr. Bonaduce, according to the story, was destitute, relying on friends to help him get by. He was in pain from his roles in numerous Karate movies, added the story, and was caught with possession of cocaine. What better way to get back on the right track than to host *Beyond Vaudeville*?

When asked to host the show, the sunny redhead happily agreed. The media embraced him like a long-lost friend, granting him interviews by the score.

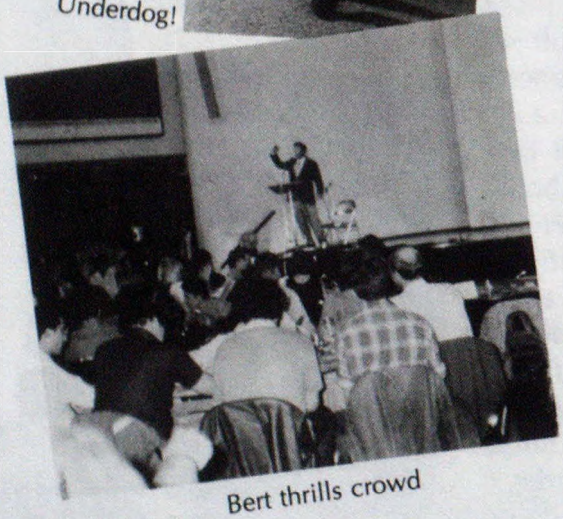








Underdog!



Bert thrills crowd

Anticipating a sell-out crowd, it was decided to return *Beyond Vaudeville* to its old home, the Eisner and Lubin Auditorium. On Wednesday night, April 30, 1986, *Beyond Vaudeville V* became reality. New acts gracing the stage that evening would include the poet laureate of Greenwich Village, a would-be rock-and-roll singer who was caught breaking into **Yoko Ono**'s apartment, a singer-actress-poetess-real estate salesperson, a soul singer, and a woman who performed a dramatic dance as the cartoon character, **Underdog**.

The show began in its usual fashion, with John Walsh conducting the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the roll call, Mr. Bonaduce entered the stage to thunderous applause and a standing ovation.

For the third year in a row, **Stryker** led off the list of performers. Always the innovator, he decided to lip sinc his songs to prerecorded synthesized arrangements by prolific keyboardist **Sal Rainone**. By the end of his performance, the crowd was intimately involved with the show.

Next up was the debut of a new *Beyond Vaudeville* legend, the brilliant and innovative dance artistry of **Miss Suzanne Muldowney**. Dressed in red tights and with a blue cape, she set out to offer a new perspective on the cartoon character, Underdog. In her dance, done to the accompaniment of classical music, she set out to explore the character's motivations. She received a standing ovation for her work.

When the crowd eventually settled down, **Joseph Erdelyi Jr.** approached the podium and delivered his stirring tribute to the late **Christa McAuliffe**, an American hero. There wasn't a dry eye in the house, due in part to **Bob Kline**'s compassionate interpretation of the requiem. Although Mr. Erdelyi and Mr. Kline had some creative differences during the rehearsal, their patriotism united them at showtime.

What could possibly follow such a tribute? The answer was simple: sexy svelte **Gretchen Weiner**. An embodiment of love, she wowed the crowd with a recitation. Dressed in leotards and strutting about the stage, her poem provoked the audience to think about the state of their society.

The next guest was the Legendary **Bert Bedell**, one of the hardest working men in *Beyond Vaudeville*. As usual, his challenging set was done with the professionalism and finesse that have become his trademarks. Following Mr. Bedell, audience members who had missed *Beyond Vaudeville IV* were caught by surprise when **Elvis Presley** next entered the stage. No, it was not the real Elvis, but a remarkable representation by the luscious **Dee Nack**.

Next came **Chairman Steve**, who took the podium and made it his own. Unfortunately, audience members had difficulty understanding his unique diction, made worse by his difficulty in understanding how to use a microphone.

Two well-trained microphone handlers followed, **John and Irene Weidenburner**, who mesmerized the audience yet again with their lovely duet, "If I Loved You." Of course, the audience enjoyed hearty laughs while Irene sang her saucy songs and John told his blue jokes.

Despite the multitude of talent preceding the next act, many audience members admitted they had come to see one man: **Omer Travers**. Mr. Travers' popularity was due in part to his relationship with Yoko Ono and Sean; the three had become acquainted when Mr. Travers broke into their apartment to say hi. A string broke on his guitar during his *Beyond Vaudeville V* performance, but he continued to rousing applause.

Suddenly, a sweet surprise was added to the program. With a voice dipped in honey, Ms. **Ethel Morgan** hypnotized the audience with "A Day In The Life of a Fool" and "Beautiful Dreamer."

Still elated by Ms. Morgan's performance, the crowd was prepared for something extraordinary. That "something extraordinary" was **Lance Venture**, whose emoting of "Life in A Northern Town" prompted several audience members to clamber on to the stage. Even actor **John Cusack** was taken with the performance, and took to the stage alongside The Emotional One.

Once again, for the fifth consecutive year, audiences fell to the terror that is "Thomas Paine." *Beyond Vaudeville* purists were outraged by the performance, however, since **Dave Greene** had traded his patented suit for a white shirt and blue jeans. Nevertheless, he was forgiven, and his performance was electric.

To wrap things up, **Mr. Feldman** served his benediction. Lost in thought, the audience patiently listened to his words. "Life is a farce!," he lectured to his numerous fans, who applauded his wisdom.

Following Mr. Feldman's benediction, the entire cast lined up on the stage. Led musically by Mr. Joseph Erdelyi Jr. and Mr. Bob Kline, they all joined in a rousing finale of "Yankee Doodle Dandy."

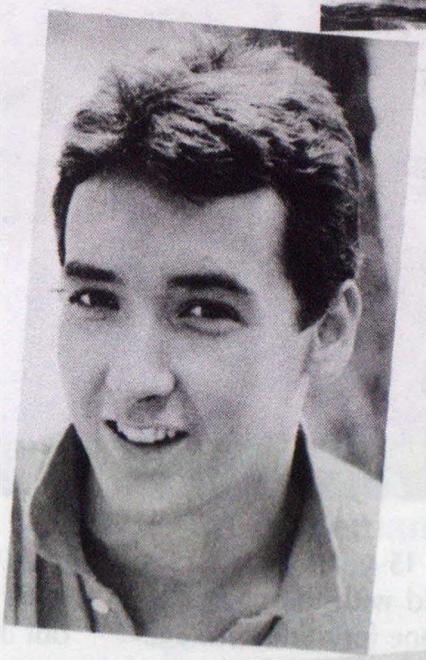
Danny Bonaduce thanked the audience for attending, and left the arena. The audience, yelling for more, eventually had to be asked to leave. Next year would be another *Beyond Vaudeville*.



Omer Travers

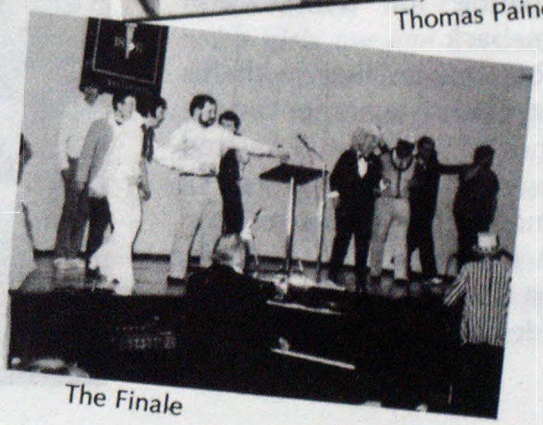


Ms. Ethel Morgan





Thomas Paine



The Finale

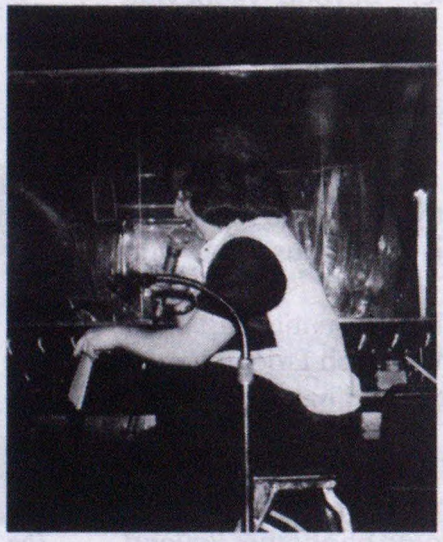
MASON
HOST of BEYOND



About 15 years ago, a red-haired kid with the chutzpah of someone four times his age starred in an award-winning television commercial for Underwood deviled ham. Today, 21-year-old Mason Reese is preparing for a television comeback.

Reese, who lives with his mother in an apartment on the upper West Side, still has red hair and the worldliness of someone four times his age. His height is 4'10", he said, "but I usually say five."

He has been in 70 commercials, beginning with one for Ivory Snow in 1970. He beat out 800 other children in that audition, he said, because, "I was able to take a script at age four and memorize it forwards and backwards in five minutes."



The main thing holding back his career lately is a series of accidents that would make Evel Knievel envious. "I'm a klutz, man, I'm a klutz," Reese admitted.

A recent fall left his right arm in a cast for two months, but the break was minor compared to his other accidents. Two years ago, for example, a participant in a contest that he was judging at the Limelight disco didn't like his decision: "Someone told her I didn't vote for her, and she decked me," he said.

There was also an overzealous fan who jumped on him in a restaurant last year. "It happened so fast," he said. "I've had people laugh, cry and scream when they've met me, but I've never had anyone jump on me." A table crashed down on him in this incident, breaking his right arm and right leg, and he was incapacitated for nine months.

REESE
VAUDEVILLE IV

As if that wasn't enough, surgery after the restaurant accident shortened his right leg, and his left leg was surgically broken to balance the two. He now attends physical therapy sessions three times a week, where his therapist "bends the hell out of my legs."

But Reese hasn't given up. "I'm recovering and trying to put things together," he said. He's playing the drums with a rhythm and blues band, and they are appearing at local clubs. Having his arm in a sling doesn't stop him: "I'm still practicing drums, but with one arm."



He has also collaborated with his mother on a script for a television pilot, a variety show called "Mason & Co." Although he enjoys playing drums, he said, "television is what I do best."

Reese said his television work has made it impossible for him to go anywhere without being recognized. He's regularly spotted at Heartbreak, Cafe Pacifico, The Milk Bar and his favorite nightspot, The China Club.

Like many other life-long upper Westsiders, Reese said he enjoys the creativity of his neighbors. He also likes the influx of new stores on Amsterdam Ave., but fears it may be getting "too chic." Columbus Ave., he said, is too crowded on weekends and is "Godalmighty expensive."

"The problem is that Columbus has really gone Hollywoodish," he said. Well, Mason, that's showbiz.



What Mason Reese Looks For In A Woman

- ***Blonde***
- ***Southern Accent***
- ***Not superficial ("I don't like these women who go out with tall jocks.")***
- ***Older than 21 ("I don't have much in common with girls my age because they're superficial.")***
- ***Height between 5 feet and 5 feet 2 inches ("I don't want a girl who's 10 inches taller than me.")***
- ***Ability to deal with his adoring fans ("I can't help it, but that's the way it is.")***

DANNY B
HOST of BEYOND



Beyond Vaudeville was just one stop on the Danny Bonaduce Express to Stardom. His talents are many: actor, comedian, martial arts expert, and giving human being.

Mr. Bonaduce is probably best remembered as Danny Partridge, the mischievous redhead on television's side-splitting *The Partridge Family.* But that wasn't his first exposure to television, as perceptive viewers already knew. Lucky viewers in the early 1970s caught glimpses of the prolific young star on such comedic gems as *Bewitched, The Ghost and Mrs. Muir,* and *Mayberry R.F.D.*.

Born on August 13, his parents—both television writers—decided to name their handsome young addition Dante Daniel Bonaduce. As a child, he enjoyed horseback riding, mini-bike riding, and skiing. His favorite singers growing up were Paul McCartney and David Cassidy, and his secret ambition was to be the world's greatest guitarist.

Over the years, his extensive television work has included *Police Story, Eight Is Enough, CHIPS,* and *Fantasy Island.* His movie credits, in addition to several martial arts films, include roles in *Corvette Summer, Revenge of the Dragon, Murder on Flight 502,* and *The Intruders.*

His extensive theatrical training in television and movies prepared him well for his stint as *Beyond Vaudeville V* host. One fan at the show was so taken with his emcee ability that she attempted to make Danny and her come together as one—but Mr. Bonaduce, happily married and a gentleman, declined the offer.

It's been a long road for Mr. Bonaduce since *The Partridge Family,* and there are plenty of miles ahead. The future is his.

O N A D U C E

V A U D E V I L L E V



A L HOST of BEYOND

It's 7:00 PM at the On Parade Restaurant, a Broadway diner just north of Jack Dempsey corner, between 49th and 50th. The regulars nod at Al Lewis, who enters from the cold, throws his coat over a chair, has a seat, and orders a dish of rice pudding and a cup of coffee.



"I'm freezing my knickers off," says Lewis, having just returned from an all-day South Ferry shoot for *Comic Cabby*, a made-for-television movie. According to Lewis, "A gypsy goes where the work is." And since 1922, claims the 76-year-old, he's been performing wherever he could find the work.

"All you idiots discovered me in television," says Lewis, with the same broad smile and giggle that made him famous as Grandpa in television's *The Munsters*. He says the 1963-65 series, a situation comedy about modern day Transylvanian ghouls, is shown today in syndication 100 times a day in 44 countries. He has 600 television roles under his belt, he says, including the popular sitcoms *Car 54, Where Are You?* and *Sergeant Bilko*.

Lewis' work before television included walking slack wires, riding trick unicycles, and playing the musical saw. He fondly remembers his work in circuses, carnivals, vaudeville, and burlesque, but, he insists, "I don't live in the past."

Lewis recently returned to live in Manhattan after a 21-year absence, and the energetic performer has already been making the rounds: WXRK-FM's *Howard Stern Show*, WOR-TV's *Joe Franklin Show*, and Club 4D's Halloween celebration.

Lewis says for several years he was based out of Manhattan's upper West Side, but lived in California and traveled following his work on *The Munsters*. He says he's noticed "amazing" changes in the upper West Side since he left 21 years ago, noting, "When I lived there, day or night, nobody walked down Columbus Avenue. Now it's kind of an uptown Greenwich Village."

One thing that has remained constant in Lewis' life is his enthusiasm for his work. Chomping on an ever-present Anisette cigar, he says he can't retire. "What the Hell would I do?," he asks, "Sit on a rocking chair?"

When Lewis gets on a roll, his enthusiasm and theories on living begin to sound like a self-help lecture. "Every day you do nothing about your potential, that's a wasted day," he says. "My secret for success is to deal with only those things that you have control over," he says, adding, "You'd be amazed at the amount of time you have."

The formula has worked well for him. He has residences in Encino, Zurich, and on Manhattan's upper East Side, and almost always appears to be smiling. "I'm comfortable," he says.

Lewis has been seeing his current girlfriend, an actress

LEWIS VAUDEVILLE VI







and blackbelt karate instructor, for over a year. He has three children from a marriage that ended in divorce after 24 years. Lewis takes the divorce matter-of-factly: "It was there while it was there, and it was over and that was it. No big deal. What am I going to do? Spend 11 yeares and $14,000 on the couch to find out? If I get the answer, so what? What am I going to do with it? Put it in a time capsule? Who cares? Life goes on!"

He also says he's not bothered by the fact he can't make public appearances in the costume and makeup of Grandpa Munster, even though he says he had to turn away a $400,000 offer a few weeks ago to play the character in a commercial. The character rights are held by Universal Studios, he says, yet he claims to have created the character himself.

"I made that character live," he says. Large portions of *The Munsters*, according to Lewis, were improvised. The cast of the show, which he says got along "very well," have reunited for four movies and one special, and he says he is hoping for another reunion.

Meanwhile, royalties continue to come in. When asked



if the royalties are substantial, he asks, "Do I look like I fell off a turnip truck?" And although he collects royalties for *The Munsters*, he says he has never watched an entire episode. "I've got more important things to do," he says. "I don't need to get enamored of myself."

"Very few people get to do what they love to do, and in that way, I'm fortunate and grateful and happy about it," he says. When asked what's ahead for Al Lewis, the actor smiles, sifts through his bag of schtick, and says, "tomorrow."

BEYOND VAUDEVILLE TV: AN ORAL HISTORY

It all started with a call from Sammy.

"Rich, man, all the cats know, television's the way to go. You've got to get tube-wise. That's where the money is, man. The success."

This was The Man talking, a former Rat Packer. Who was Rich to argue? After the numerous megapopular *Beyond Vaudeville* stage shows, Rich, intrepid promoter that he was, always looking for bigger fish to fry, decided to solicit advice from his old showbiz compadre. And it didn't take Rich too long to catch this cat's drift.

Armed with a wad of Jeffersons and assistance from his faithful squeeze K.K. and the technical virtuosity of Steverino, Rich set out to conquer the airwaves.

Rejection after rejection followed. ABC's Brandon Stoddard said, "TV variety talk



Sammy

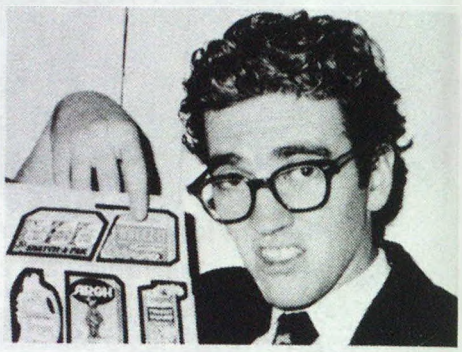
show? No go!" NBC was even harsher. "Are you out of your fucking mind? Out of my office—now!" was Brandon Tartikoff's retort. But it was CBS's chief, former child star Brandon Cruz, who said, "Lissen, Richie, babe, I've learned a lot from my experience on *Courtship*. First of all, TV shows about real people don't go over too well. F'rinstance, Bixby had much more success playin' against musclebound retards like Ferrigno and robotic bimbos like Marriette. An' speakin' of real people, what the fuck ever happened to Skip Stephenson?"

Rich was not too thrilled to hear this disheartening news. Here they were, the top three TV honchos telling him his show had no future.

One day, however, all this changed. While thumbing through the pages of *Roy Radin's Showbiz Illustrated*, Rich found what he had always dreamed about. It was an ad from an up-and-coming Gotham cable TV network, and it all but cried out for Rich's expertise and experience. It read:

Wanted: Gifted, young impresario to start up exciting new TV variety talk show. For up-and-coming Gotham cable TV network. Write box RRS109.

This was it. Rich immediately wrote to the magazine and set up an interview with this Gotham cable TV network.



This is the break I need, thought Rich as he entered the posh offices of Washington Heights' multimillion-dollar Manhattan Cable Studios. Studio head Fritz Fitzwilly was held in Rich's thrall as the young ace outlined his proposal. This guy's got something, Fitzwilly thought, and it's gonna be huge.

It didn't take long for Fitzwilly to say, "Okee dokee." He soon signed Rich to an exclusive multiyear contract with the firm. The contract called for a monthly half-hour talk show featuring unique and underappreciated performers, philosophers, artists and hairdressers.

With the contract, Fitzwilly offered, "Rich, my man, here 'tis. I'm givin' you full run of our luxurious facilities. I've

got complete faith in you. So get busy one time."

With those words a hit show was born. *Beyond Vaudeville—The TV Show* had arrived. And what a show it was.

The host, Michael Kaufman, was a bold young accountant and brother of Latka Gravas. He previously starred as the loan officer who gets called a faggot by Rick Rubin in the hit movie *Krush Groove*. After a few shaky starts, Kaufman, a consummate professional, finally settled into his role as provocature of the panel and sometime devil's advocate.

The parade of stars that followed featured some of the finest talent Rich and his staff of 40 could round up or unearth. Early shows debuted such stunning performers as rockabilly legend Red Lightning, abstract painter Constantin Bokov and his child prodigy son, Alex. Who can ever forget Alex's touchingly poetic tribute to his classrooms sweetheart that set the hearts of many of the show's grammar-school-aged nubile viewers aflutter?



Frank Hope with Chris Deola (l.) and Bernard Charval

Later shows featured the vocal stylings of Sinatra soundalike Austin Velez, Long Island's own Stryker and the bodacious Bert Bedell. The rantings of devilish Benny Orlock. Mr. Joseph Feldman's brilliant treatises on the human condition. The beautifully evocative interpretive dances of Underdog enthusiast Suzanne Muldowney. The puppetry of Chris Deola and Bernard (haircutter *extraordinaire*) Charvel. These were just a few of the luminaries who paraded across *Beyond Vaudeville*'s soundstages.

But as-yet-untapped performers were not the only resources open to the staff of the *Beyond Vaudeville* TV shows. Soon episodes were featuring the likes of such seasoned enteretainment-industry veterans as commercial legend Mason Reese and talent entrepreneur and frequent Letterman guest Richard Roffman. Ratings for these shows went through the roof. Hailed by one New York tabloid as "the most innovative program the tube has to offer," the show became a smash.

After a memorable string of shows, host Kaufman decided to pack it in and venture after greener pastures. His leaving set the stage for the arrival of a new master of ceremonies, the remarkable Frank Hope. Hope (no relation to Bob, though there is a stylistic resemblance) ushered in a new beginning for *Beyond Vaudeville*, one of comedic delights and informative information.

Helping considerably was the addition of resident movie critic Kevin and his pal, Bub. Their insightful analyses and thoughtful prose have lent an air of intellectual graciousness to the proceedings.



Kevin Calia and friend Bub

Well, enough of the humble origins of the TV spectacular that is *Beyond Vaudeville*. Here's hoping the future live performances and televised ones follow in this terrific tradition. And a special thanks goes out to Sammy for his undying support and love. Take care cat. And that Essence Rhythm & Views Tribute was well earned.

Beyond Vaudeville can be seen on Manhattan Cable and Group W television. Check local listings for time and channel.

—D. Allen Brod


PLAGUE
"LIVEN UP YOUR PARLOUR WITH SOUNDS FROM THE PLAGUE."
SIDE 1
BEYOND VAUDEVILLE AT NYU
MR. FRANK MOSHMAN
"STRYKFR"
MR. JOSEPH ERDELYI, JR.
THOMAS PAINE
PLAYBUL
THE PUB
EYOND
UDEVILLE
III
78
VOICE MAY 6, 1986
Free or Under $2.50
WEDNESDAY
Phil Thrill: What's going on in the Philippines w/ Hermenegildo Cruz fr Mission to UN, Inst of Asian Studies, Queens Campus of St. John's U, Grand Central & Utopia Pkways, Jamaica, 718-990-6161, 2 p.m., free.
Chinese Chalkers: "Story of the Chalk Circle," adaptation of a 14th cent Chinese play, Thurs & Fri too, City College Aaron Davis Theater, W 134th St & Convent Ave, 749-0160, 6 p.m., free.
Post-Partridge Art: Ex-Partridge Danny Bonaduce hosts vaudeville show, w/ Omer Travers, guy who broke into Yoko Ono's apt; Dee Nack, female Elvis; ballet tribute to cartoon show "Underdog"; Irene, the "Gong Show Queen of Long Island"; philosopher & guy dressed like Uncle Sam, Loeb Student Ctr, 566 LaGuardia Pl, 598-2141, 7:30 p.m., $2.
Best Poetry on Erpf: Poets read at R. C. Erpf Gallery, 578 Bway, 925-6160, 8 p.m., $3 ($2.50 w/ this page).
Censored: Readings fr works of ensored & imprisoned Turkish riters, w/ Arthur Miller, PEN way, 334-1660, 8
Joan L

BEYOND DEVILLE



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MASON REESE

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EDITED BY LI



ENQUIRER Story Helps Down & Out 'Partridge Family' Star Land Job

ter several hours the harried hairdresser finally got it right.

★ ★ ★

A handsome skier came to the aid of a girl who'd broken her ankle in a fall while skiing in the Aspen mountains. The guy carried her a mile before turning her over to a ski patrol and it was only then that the shocked girl realized her rescuer was "Hotel" star **James Brolin.**

★ ★ ★

Art Linkletter's little granddaughter said the darndest thing when she took him to school to meet her third-grade classmates. The veteran star was bowled over when she introduced him with the words: "This is my grandpa, who is 73 years old. Isn't it amazing that he's still alive?"

★ ★ ★

Thanks to a recent ENQUIRER article revealing his problems finding work, former "Partridge Family" star **Danny Bonaduce** landed a job hosting a variety talent show at New York University. Organizers of the April 30 show spotted the article and asked Danny to emcee for them — and he happily agreed.

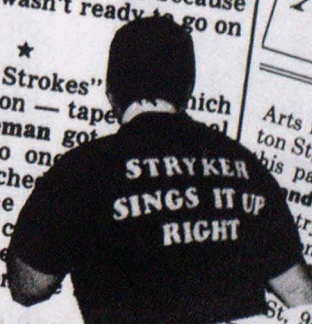
★ ★ ★

"Moonlighting" star **Bruce Willis** — furious over production delays on the show — has told producers he won't be back next fall unless they get things running on time. As you read here months ago, the series fell so far behind in shooting this season that ABC had to run a repeat one week because the scheduled episode wasn't ready to go on the air.

★ ★ ★

When "Diff'rent Strokes" won't be back next season — tape which episode, star **Gary Coleman** got up that he had to redo one times. The delays stretched five hours instead of the and the entire cast and c their eyes at various time ing. Gary, 18, has been o years.

— Edited by PEGGY DATTILO





For Week
Apr. 30-May 6

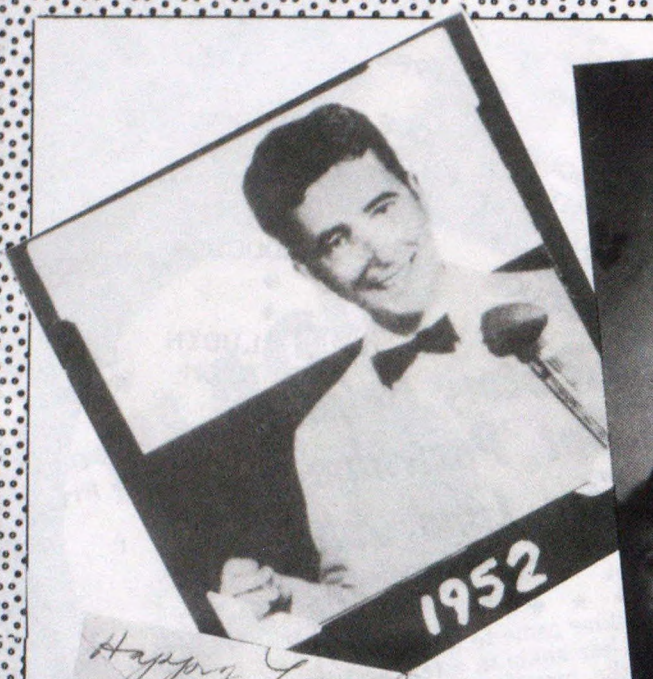
Arts fest, ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St, 254-3697, 3 p.m., $3 ($2.50 w/ this page).

...ndra Armer/Natta Haynes: ...try, 77 Barrow St, 924-1696, 8 ...ntrib.

...Marie Levine/Paul Violi: ...Cornelia St Cafe, 29 Cor... St, 989-9319, 8:30 p.m., free.

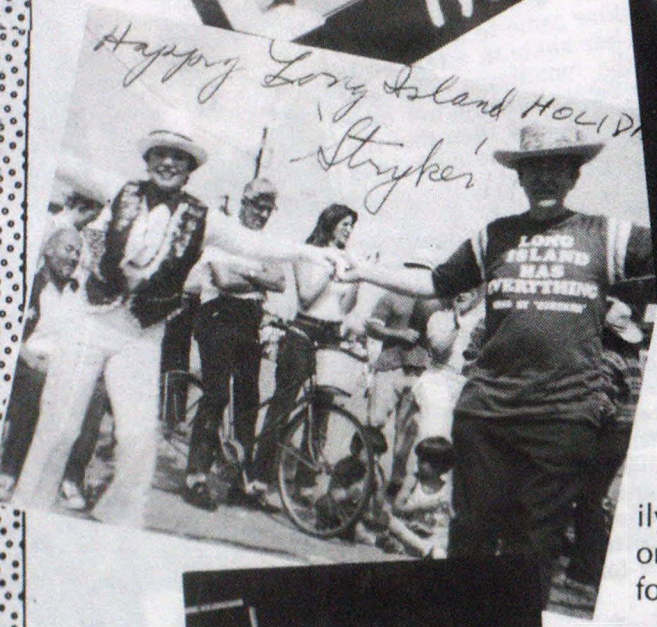
MONDAY

Famous Bunche: including Kenneth Clark & Nabil el Arabi h... diplomat Ralph Bunch... guy to win N... too (...





Stryker and Irene with Joe Franklin, his wife Lois, and Jan Serra





Stryker has been a member of the Beyond Vaudeville family since the first Beyond Vaudeville stage production. His originality and verve always makes the one-of-a-kind performer a favorite with audiences.

"I always liked to sing," he says. "I used to just sing songs, and I'd sing loud. I'd sing on the streets, I'd sing when I was walking, driving." His wife and children didn't appreciate his singing.

"In my house," he says, "they didn't like it at all—they'd often tell me to shut up. They used to ridicule me, and others did as well." The criticism, he says, made him more determined to pursue his talents. He began appearing at Long Island talent shows, often performing at the mercy of a gong.

It was about 1949 that Stryker began to write original songs. The first, "Don't Cry, Crunchy Wunchy," was based on a dream. "There was a dwarf running around in my dream," he recalls. "This was a technicolor dream, and there was like cereal cracking all over the place. And there was this dwarf, saying, 'Crunchy Wunchy, Crunchy Wunchy!' When I woke up, I wrote the song."

Stryker



Stryker with Lovely Marion Weidenburner

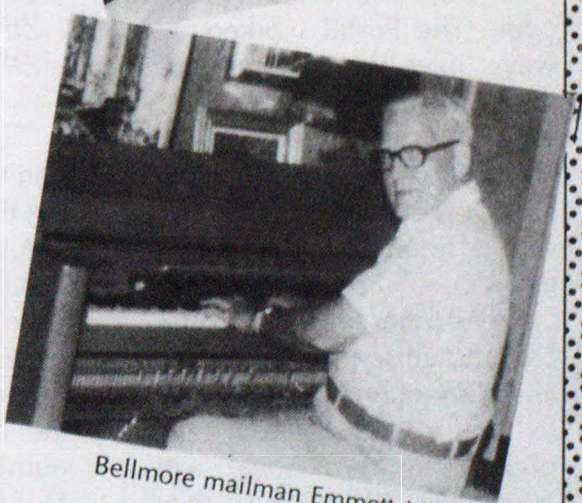
Stryker has since written over two dozen songs, many based on his life experiences. Most of these songs have been incorporated into a full-length screenplay, "Oh Baby, What I Couldn't Do, With Plenty of Money and You," which he completed after two years.

His most recent project is a new song, "Zip Plus Four," which discusses the merits of extended zip codes. The song was co-written with Emmett McAvoy, a mailman who has passed away since the work was composed.

Stryker's work has been recognized by such luminaries as Joe Franklin (particularly for Stryker's original composition, "On Joe Franklin's Memory Lane"), Liza Minelli, and Thomas S. Gulotta, Presiding Supervisor of the Town of Hempstead.

Ms. Minelli is a big fan of Stryker's themesong, "Long Island Has Everything," also an original composition. Says Ms. Minelli: "I enjoyed listening to it very much and have to agree . . . that Long Island is most beautiful. I am sorry but it is impossible for me to record or perform (Stryker's) songs because of the way my show is structured."

If you don't believe it, ask Stryker if you can see her letter, written on her own personal, shocking pink stationery.



Bellmore mailman Emmett McAvoy

STRYKER ON ZIP CODES

During a recent visit to the Post Office I was made aware of the "ZIP + FOUR" Postal books that have been printed which I was told sold for $9.00 a state. That's a good buy considering they are large books and N.Y. State has about 6 books. Also the regular "ZIP" book for all of the United States is a good buy for $9.00. I recently bought one because the "ZIP" song made me more aware of the need to have *accurate* "ZIP" codes at my fingertips. I had a small "ZIP" code book given to me by a bank but I learned that some of the "ZIPS" were incorrect.

I've been informed that most people use the "ZIP" codes. However, many people are unaware that they can purchase their own "ZIP" book at the Post Office. I first learned you could in December 1986.

Many times I've called my local Post Office for a "ZIP" code. The Postal workers always have been courteous about looking up the "ZIP" which usually took them about 3 to 4 minutes to get the "ZIP" I requested.

It is important to promote the sale of "ZIP" books because it can save the Postal Departments very much time and distraction which it takes to look up "ZIPS" from telephone inquiries. Some will omit the "ZIP" because they don't want the bother of calling the P.O. for a "ZIP".

After seeing the "ZIP + FOUR" books for just N.Y. State, I realized that there must have been considerable expense to print them and assign the detailed "ZIP + FOUR" numbers throughout the USA. This is another good reason for the promotion of the "ZIP + FOUR".

Postal employees have informed me that "ZIP + FOUR" numbers are more for businesses to use rather than residences.

At this time it does not seem practical for residences to buy the "ZIP + FOUR Books.

"ZIP"

Mack was a mail man in BELLMORE
He knew ev-ry number on the street
Then one day Zip Code came our way
Now Mack sings a song that goes like this

So know your ZIP ZIP ZIP
I'll introduce him Mis-ter ZIP ZIP ZIP
Please put a number on each letter that you mail
It's just a small detail
To make it ZIP Put a code on it.

If you want your letter to your Love in L.A. or
Santa Fe
To get there right a-way
Seal it with a kiss from your lip
And don't forget your ZIP ZIP ZIP

It's faster you will see
If you all don't forget your ZIP ZIP ZIP
And use the system to move mail without delay
Throughout the USA
To make it ZIP Put a code on it

It started with a five number ZIP
Now they've added four more
To send your love-note faster than before
Use your ZIP plus four
ZIP ZIP-I-TY ZIP ZIP ZIP
ZIP ZIP ZIP ZIP ZIP!

DANNY MEETS UNDERDOG

DANNY: You take your career as the dancing Underdog rather seriously, don't you?

SUSANNE: **I don't do *just* Underdog. I take my kind of dancing very seriously. I do him much more refined and sophisticated than the original cartoon character was.**

DANNY: Yes, I noticed that immediately. What other characters do you do besides Underdog?

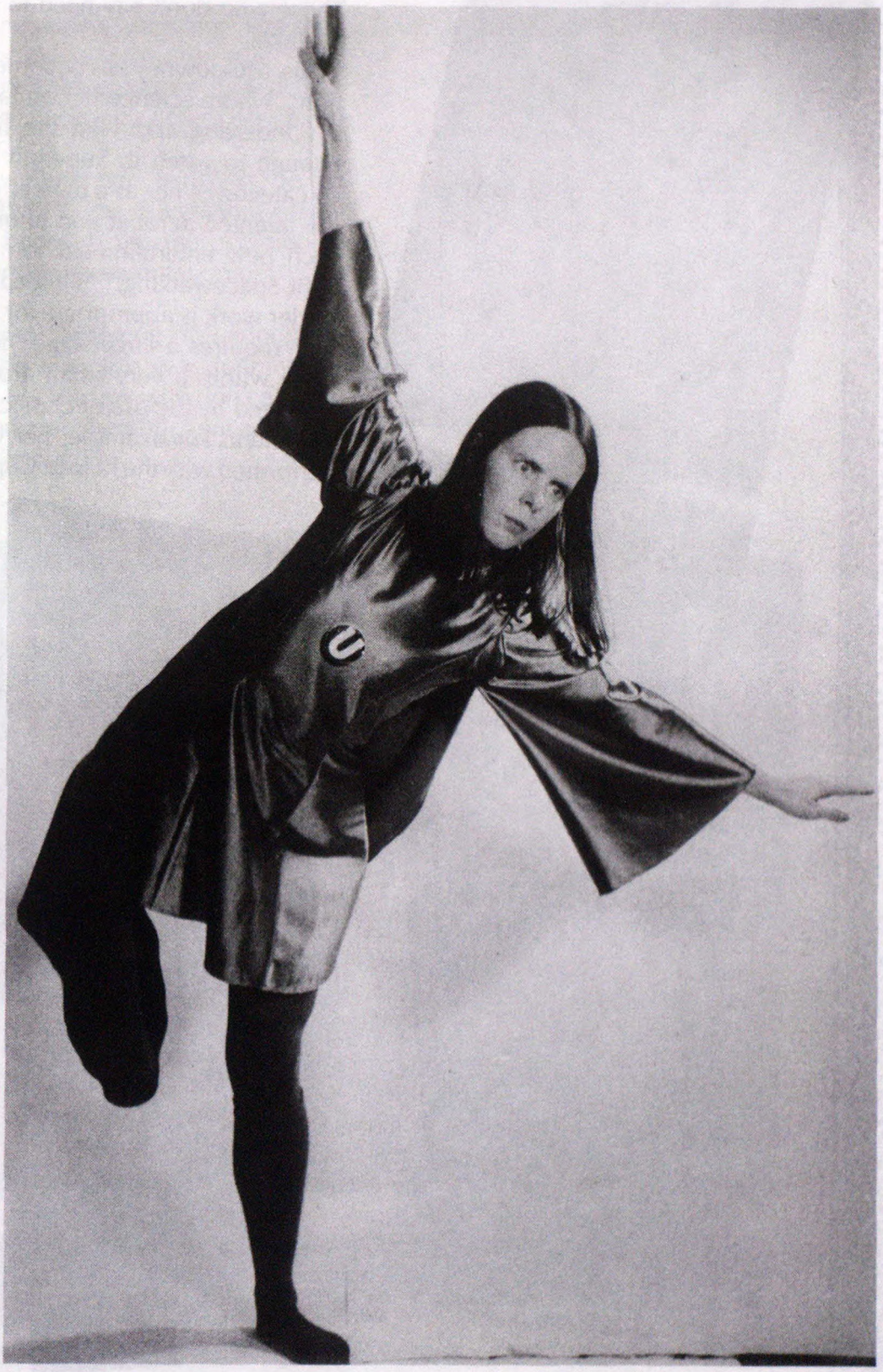
SUZANNE: **Sometimes I don't do just characters; I do dancing in general. But in answer to your question, another character for which I'm reknowned is Supergirl—Which is almost an equivalent to Underdog, because both superheroes fly. Also, another character I've been doing for about ten years is Dracula. Not just that crazy old Vampire—I do Dracula as the real-life prince. Have you ever heard of Vlad the Impaler? I'm much more into the real Vlad.**

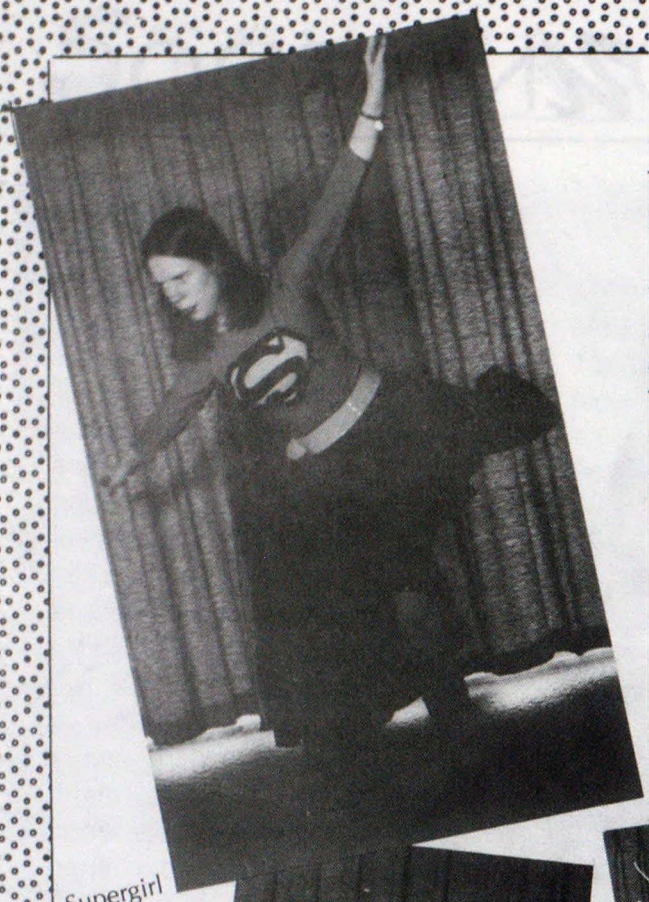
DANNY: How long have you been dancing as cartoon characters?

SUZANNE: **Underdog is really the only cartoon character I've done in depth. I started doing it at the end of 1965, when I was first exposed to the TV series. It came out in '64, and I got my calling at the end of '65. But then I stopped doing it in '68. Then, in the summer of '80, I began taking it up again on a more stagebound professional basis, and I heard about a Queens based science fiction convention company. They mount shows all over key cities in the U.S. You yourself have been in some of their L.A. shows, haven't you?**

DANNY: Yes, I have. I've gone to see them.

SUZANNE: **Well, predominantly I've been doing shows in Philadelphia and New York.**





Supergirl

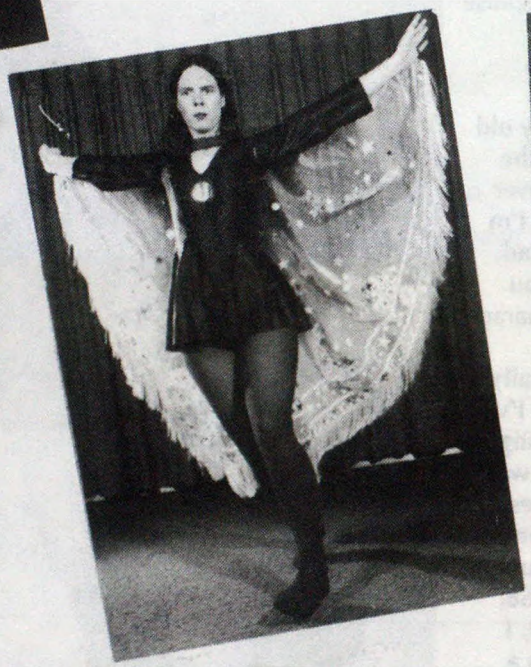
Suzanne Muldowney is a dancer, a poser, a student of Dracula lore, and an attention-getter of great magnitude. Those who don't pay heed to her abilities are making a big mistake.

Ms. Muldowney has become a regular at Creation Conventions, where science fiction fans applaud her performances as Underdog and Vlad the Impaler (and, for those lucky enough to catch it, Supergirl and Spectra the Ghost King). To categorize her as a dancer would be inappropriate, since the talented acrobat and choreographer has come up with such new entertainment forms as "Figure-jogging," "Spotlight Spacewalking," "Flyleaping," and "Balancercizing."

Her work is appropriate for all settings. Whereas "Flyleaping" requires a large stage, her "Showcase Posing" can be done within a very small arena. And much of her work is accented by the use of classical music recordings as accompaniment. For example, her Underdog Showcase Posing is performed with the help of Copland's "Preamble for a Solemn



Emperor Nero



Underdog





Vlad Tepes (Dracula): Castle Bran

Occasion." Her Freestyle Flyleaping as Underdog, another example, is done to the sweet sound of Mahler's Symphony #1, 2nd movement.

"The Underdog act is not one dance, but many," she says, "depicting different facets." She explains the rationale: "Why so many? Three years ago, when the character turned 20, I thought I was going to do the part many times; hence the creation of many routines."

Ms. Muldowney may very well get her chance to "do the part many times." She says 1989 is the Silver Anniversary year for Underdog, and she hopes to use the occasion to prove to the world that the cartoon representation of Underdog was inappropriate.

As if the Silver Anniversary of Underdog isn't enough to worry about, Ms. Muldowney is busy this year donning her costumes as Vlad the Impaler. For the few who don't already know, she explains, this year marks the 90th anniversary of Bram Stoker's gothic novel, *Dracula*.

Suzanne Muldowney





Vlad Tepes (Dracula): Castle Ambras Ensemble

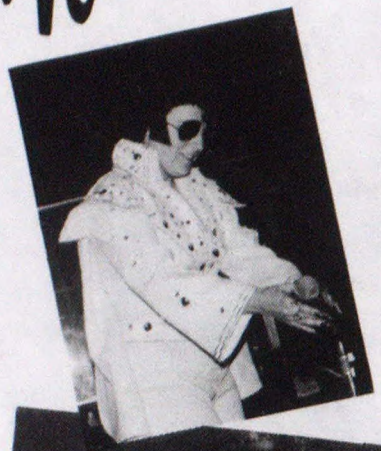


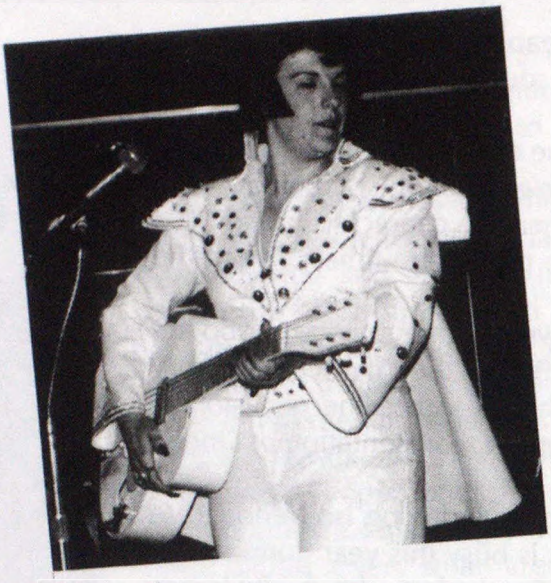
Vlad Tepes (Dracula): Military Crusader



Dracula the Vampire

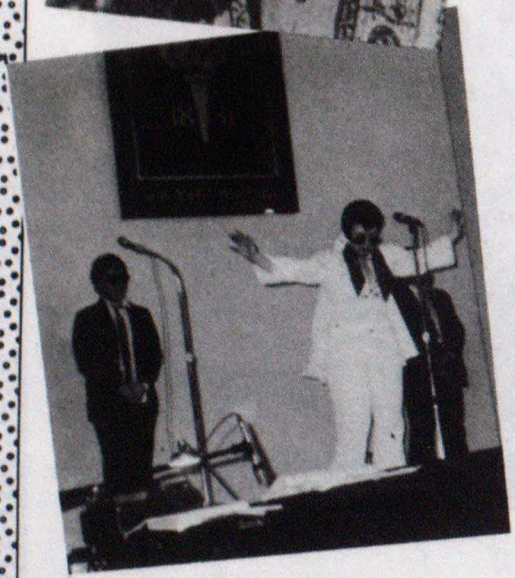
Dee Nack











Ladies and gentlemen, The King is alive and well and has never sounded better!

When Dee Nack dons her Elvis Presley costume on stage and starts to move her hips, the performance has been known to bring tears to the eyes of The King's many fans.

Ms. Nack explains the origins of her stirring tribute as follows: "I became interested in doing Elvis when I was 19 years old. I worked a regular job, where my boss used to always say to me, 'Come on, Dee, let's go to the ladies room. I want you to sing Elvis.' She used to take me into the ladies room and call some of my other co-workers in to hear me do Elvis."

The earliest signs of Ms. Nack's musical gift were noticeable at age five, when she played piano by ear. "I used to play with gloves on, blindfolded and standing up," she says. "Nobody said I could do it." Before long, she was also playing the accordian and harmonica with expertise.

The child prodigy had the good fortune of growing up in a show business family. Her father, Mr. Nack, studied at Carnegie Hall under Professor Rafelli. Mrs. Nack, both his wife and Dee's mother, was a singer and dancer.

Ms. Nack's brother, an Elvis impersonator, died at a very young age, prompting her to start her career as Elvis. "He inspired me," she says, adding her act is partially a tribute to her late brother.

Prior to her career as an Elvis impersonator, and beginning at age 15, Ms. Nack was singing Top-40 and Oldies at showcases in Manhattan and on Long Island. The versatile performer has also been a professional Hawaiian-Tahitian dancer, and has studied acting for ten years.

Dee Nack's star is firmly planted in the Show Business Galaxy.

Bert Bedell







Few singers can deliver a song with the same enthusiasm and sincerity as Bert Bedell. With a singing style modelled after Frank Sinatra (the *Early* Frank Sinatra), the native Long Islander relates his start in show business:

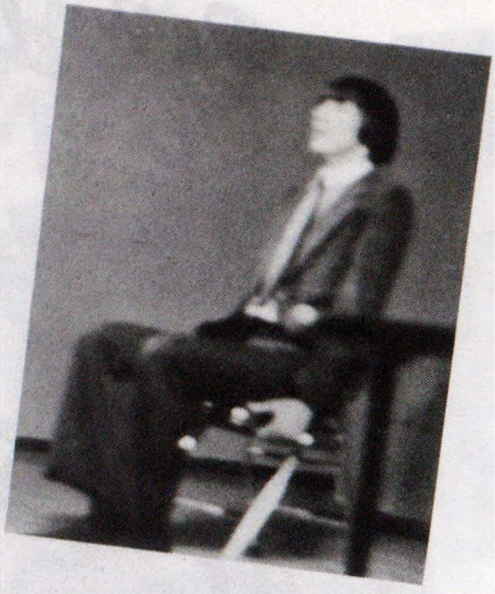
"Now, for the way I got started. A friend of mine dared me to go down to Richard M. Dixon's club in Massapequa, Long Island, so I took him up on that bet. He didn't think I'd do it—neither did I, quite frankly—but I went down there one night and I was asked to perform by Dixon himself. This, incidentally, is the club where Eddie Murphy first played, before he became professional. Well, I went up there, and I did three numbers. How the Hell I got across, I don't know, but I got away with it. Then I began to go back there, because it was such a fun gig. I played there about a hundred times or more, I guess. Then I began to rotate different clubs on the Island, such as one called the Holiday Inn Downstairs Room. I've played a number of clubs on Long Island, mostly singing standards. That's my thing."

Mr. Bedell best enjoys singing the pop songs written between 1935 and 1945. "It's such fun doing these kind of numbers, because the writers that made these standards were such tremendous composers," he says, citing such megastars as Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Richard Rogers, Mack Gordon, Harry Warren, Sammy Kahn, and Julie Stein. "I could go on and on, but there's just too many of them to mention right now," he says.

"The songs they wrote in those days were beautiful," he says, "and they stand up today."

A member of the *Beyond Vaudeville* family since the early days, he refers to the stage shows as "about the best gig I've ever done."





"Well, I was sitting around in the lounge one day, right near 'The Plague' office . . . and there was this thing I could do, like build up pressure in my head . . . so I just thought I'd do something fun, 'cause I like to do fun things sometimes when I'm sitting around in the lounge. And I let the pressure build up in my head . . . and in all my body and then I'd act as if I'm in pain. People shouldn't be upset about it. I just act as if I'm in pain. People shouldn't be upset about it. I just act as if I'm in pain. And I do it somewhat convincingly, that's why I suppose you have me here."—Dave Greene, on what prompted him to develop Thomas Paine.



Great art is often borne out of the ashes of despair, and the act known as "Thomas Paine" is one notable example. In the spring of 1982, Steven Baccus, a 13-year-old whiz kid who attended NYU was running for the office of freshman representative on the student council; his campaign was managed by David Greene, whom the *New York Post* had called "one of the bigger men on campus" earlier that year. Greene had befriended the prodigy the previous fall after vowing to meet him that summer when he read of Baccus' pending enrollment. Dave had a reputation for discovering young talent, having brought Ben Brody, the 13-year-old comic to the attention of Richard Brown for *B.V.I.*

Baccus lost his race. Photographers from the *Daily News* attended his post-electoral party, routinely snapping their pictures of the failed candidate and a 12-year-old female model, which dutifully ran in the next morning's edition. They left without witnessing the two most memorable moments of the bash. The first was Greene declaring he would hang himself from a flimsy light fixture by his flimsier necktie. Mrs. Baccus was quite put-off by this, reproaching Dave for "scaring the children," who weren't paying much attention anyway. Soon, she and the guest of honor went home, leaving the room to Greene, several members of the *Plague* staff, and various other hangers-on. Dave, alive but still down in the dumps, not having spoken for a while, suddenly informed those present that he had something to show them.

What a show it was. First he became very still. Slowly, his breathing became more strained. His complexion grew a deep, beet red. The veins in his neck stood out. And then the screams began. Short at first, punctuated by gasps for breath, then louder, more sustained, and increasingly intense. Soon, two people on other floors of the building came racing down to investigate, thinking someone was in danger. They were told all was well, it was just an act. By then, Dave was writhing on the floor, looking more disturbed than if he had succeeded in the hanging. The pure burst of emotion overwhelmed everyone in the room, few of whom could

Thomas Paine





quite comprehend the display they had just witnessed. Dave explained to everyone that he psychologically inflicted great pain upon himself, building up pressure throughout his body, voiced in these high-pitched yelps. All were impressed.

When it came time to cast the lineup for *B.V.I.*, all agreed to invite Dave to recreate his performance of that day. For the first time, "Thomas Paine" as the act was dubbed, was performed professionally.

Since then, Thomas Paine has become almost synonymous with *Beyond Vaudeville*. The act has, to this point, almost exclusively been performed, in public, at the show. Further, many scholars feel it sums up and in many ways, represents what *Beyond Vaudeville* is all about: bold, unique, and thought-provoking.

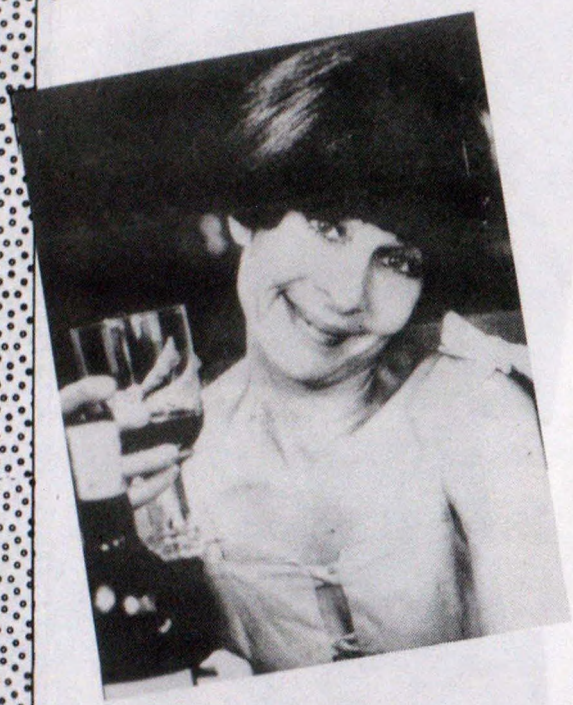
Although his first performance was aborted by the Hugh Fink Orchestra (see p. 3), many feel the following year set the standard for all subsequent Thomas Paine performances to match. The conservatively attired Greene screamed for nearly 45 seconds as an appreciative audience shared one man's torment starkly realized before their very eyes. "It sounded like rats getting swatted with a broom," noted one observer. For others, it put them in mind of squealing pigs. When the hysteria ceased, Dave's contorting body went still, and the lights went out. When they went back on, Dave was gone. A standing ovation commended.



The brilliance of the moment spoiled many in the years to come, who always measured that year's performance against the intensity of *B.V. II*. In *B.V. III*, the act seemed too brief, although the portable stage accentuated Dave's kicking, sounding to some like baboons rattling in their cages. At *B.V. IV, the act was warmly received, except by the owner of Speakeasy, who blamed Dave for breaking a microphone whose stand he had kicked over during his ordeal. In B.V. V, and, we all expect, for as long as there are Beyond Vaudevilles, Thomas Paine will ring out the true meaning of common sense to the delight of all in attendance.*

Gretchen Weiner







Gretchen Weiner typifies the innovative programming sought by the producers of Beyond Vaudeville. A multi-talented entertainer, the charming seductress is also a successful author and real estate salesperson.

As a result of her regular appearances on "The Richard Roffman" cable television show in Manhattan, millions of viewers are familiar with her risque comedy skits and humorous commercials. She has also been a guest on such major entertainment talk shows as *The Ray Heatherton Show, The Joey Adams Show,* and *The Joe Franklin Show.*

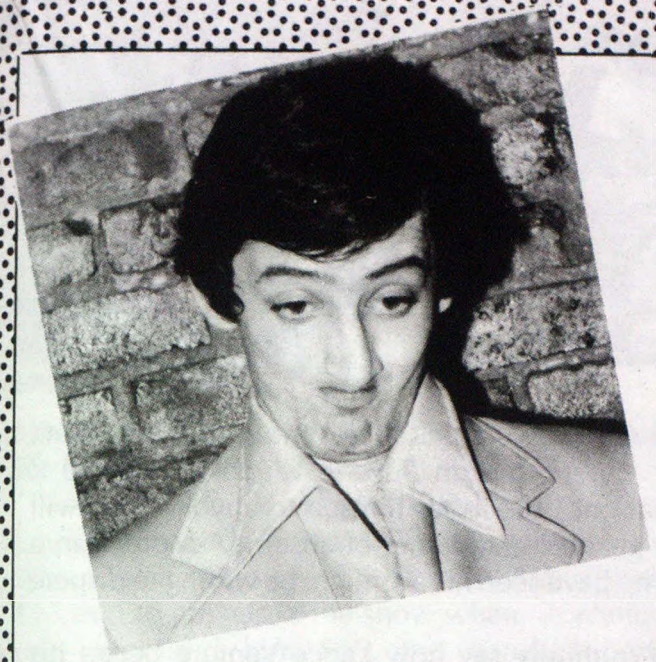
Ms. Weiner's film work includes *Book of Daniel* and *The First Turn On,* and she has appeared on radio in several plays and Red Cross appeals.

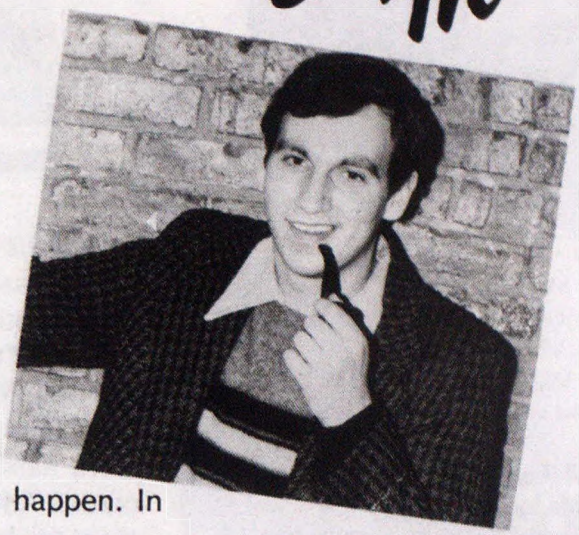
Ms. Weiner studied under Dr. Milton Smith at Columbia University and with Beverly Long as part of a commercial workshop. Her skills include golf, bowling, swimming, horseback riding, roller skating, ballroom dancing, archery, and ping pong.

To best understand Ms. Weiner's ability, we invited the Tigress herself to provide the following description: GRETCHEN WEINER:/BORN IN A POPPY FIELD WITH A PEN AND A PENCIL IN HER HAND:/INNOCULATED WITH A PHONOGRAPH NEEDLE:/ACTING:/WRITING:/PAINTING SINCE SHE IS FOUR YEARS OLD:/APPEARING WITH SUCH GREATS AS ZERO MOSTEL:/VIRGINIA PAYNE:/JOAN ROBERTS:/ARNOLD STANG:/BORIS SEGAL:/ELIZABETH BERGNER: ETAL:WRITER OF FIFTEEN CHILDREN'S STORIES:/POETRY:/HER OWN SKITS:/COMMERCIALS:/IS KNOWN AS THE YOUNGEST GRANDMA IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD:/"SNOW QUEEN:UMN . . .:/OF THE NORTH":TO HER GRAND DAUGHTERS:(CAN YOU IMAGINE A MOMMIE LIKE HER HAVING TWO YUPPIE CHILDREN?:/(BEST MOMMIE IN THE WORLD)/ALSO KNOWN AS HANSEL WITH THE WOODEN SABOTS:/(A BLOND AT HEART:/):/ALICE ALWAYS IN WONDERLAND! (WHOSE WATCH IS NEVER ON TIME:) the BEST KIND OF WATCH TO HAVE:/AS THE WHITE HARE IN ALICE IN WONDERLAND SAID!:/

And, to top things off, Ms. Weiner is also an accomplished artist. She describes her work as follows: "I have a very fine type of museum quality painting I do that is called Expressionism!"

Book & Martino



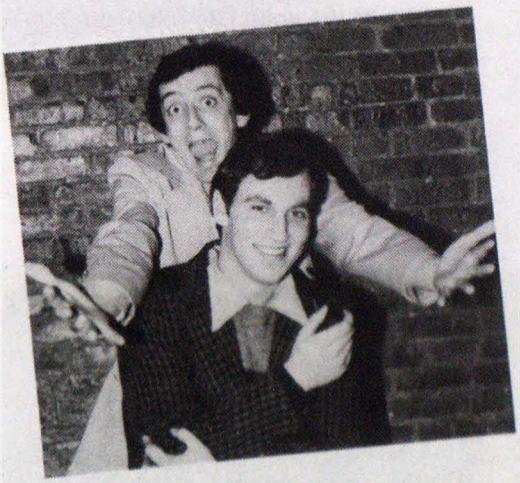


Comedy teams cannot be planned; they only happen. In this case, it happened by accident.

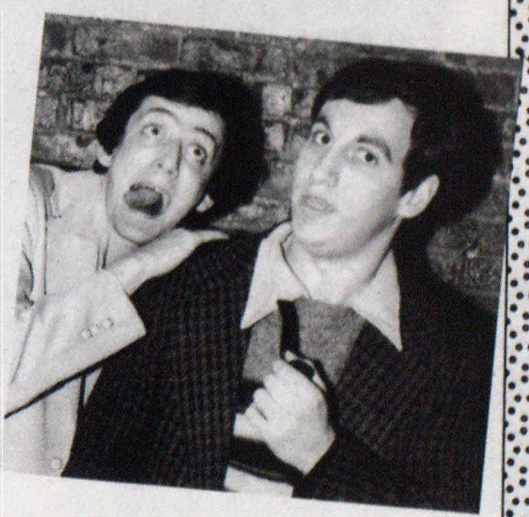
After some odd years playing some out of the way nightclubs in Pittsburgh as an impressionist and comic, Raymond T. Book II moved to New York to pursue his dream of making it in theatre.

Meanwhile, after four years in Hollywood, CA pursuing an acting career, Vito Martino returned to New York and began singing in rowdy Brooklyn nightclubs.

One night while Vito was singing at a particular club, the comedian appearing on the same bill decided to heckle him comedically. After being invited to share the stage, Book and Martino began to trade comical insults back and forth, and while they were leaving the audience in hysterics, a comedy team was being born!

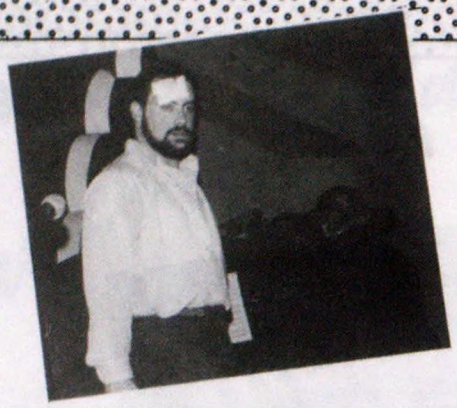


Now, after two years of playing the night club circuit in New York City, including Catch A Rising Star, Comedy U., and the Improvisation, they are ready for nationwide stardom. Move over Martin and Lewis. Adds Joe Franklin: "We haven't had a big comedy team since Abbott and Costello. The timing is right."

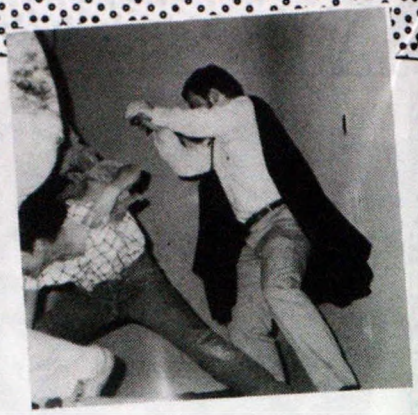


Ray Book, the wacky end of the duo, attributes his timing to Sammy Petrillo, "The funniest nightclub comedian I ever worked with." And Vito Martino, the suave and sophisticated comedian/crooner, thanks, "The numerous women I've loved, who are responsible for making me the sexy guy I am today."

Those lucky enough to have cable television in Manhattan can see Book and Martino on their own television show, *Totally Halarious*. Others can also enjoy their talents at home, by picking up the sidesplitting best-selling record album, *Interview With Count Dracula and Five Other Skits.*







BV: Mr. Venture. May I call you "Lance?"
MR. VENTURE: **NO.**
BV: Will you please tell us a bit about what you do?
MR. VENTURE: **I emote. See this? (Points to a large bandage on his forehead) Last night. Fifty stitches. Las Vegas. I really get into it. I'm gonna do it tonight anyway because I'm a trouper. I'm a professional. Don't forget that. I'm sensitive and I'm emotional.**
BV: Deeply sensitive man. It's written all over your face, in every scar . . . . Well, sir, at the risk of sounding facecious, break a leg and God bless.
MR. VENTURE: **Hey, is that all you're gonna ask me? Come on!**
BV: Well, um, where did you receive your primary schooling?
MR. VENTURE: **Hey, shut up. Ask me some good questions I can answer. My many fans out there, they wanna know stuff about me.**
BV: Sir, on an average, how many women do you have a night?
MR. VENTURE: **Wouldn't you like to know.**
BV: I'm sure all of America would like to know, or all of White Plains, at least.
MR. VENTURE: **Wipe that smirk off your face. You oughta be glad you're in my presence. All right, I think we gotta go.**

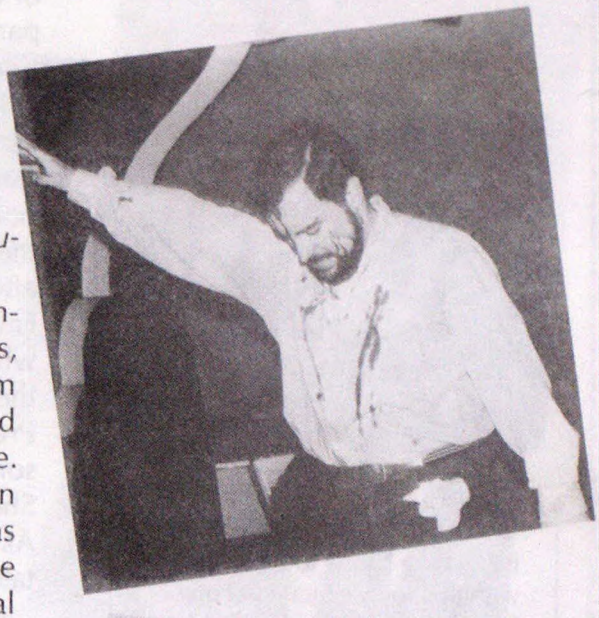
What is there to say about Lance Venture that he hasn't already said? A performer in *Beyond Vaudeville IV* and *V,* the "emotional one" describes himself to anyone who will listen as "the greatest entertainer of all time." More than a few people who have seen his act might be willing to dispute that claim.

It's hard to truthfully say how Lance Venture began his career. All the information that's known about Venture's beginnings has come from Venture himself, which means that the information is highly questionable. Venture's unusual act consists of his acting out, or "emoting" to, the lyrics of popular songs. Unlike the performers on *Puttin' On The Hits,* Venture does not lip-sync to the songs; he uses his body to visually interpret the lyrics. He has given himself the monicker of "The Emotional" Lance Venture because, as he describes it, "I let my emotions spill out onto the stage floor, much like someone's guts spill out after being blasted away by an Uzi." Venture gets so emotionally carried away while performing his act that he sometimes physically injures himself on stage. "I have more broken bones than Evel Knievel," says Venture proudly.

Venture's first appearance at *Beyond Vaudeville IV* was, unquestionably, something to remember. Venture chose the hit song "I Want To Know What Love Is" by Foreigner to emote to and, probably for the first time ever, the act appeared to go over well with the audience. On stage, Venture was sporting a large bandage on his forehead, claiming in an interview before the show that he had injured his head while performing in Las Vegas the night before, the injury being a large gash that required fifty stitches to close. Halfway through his *Beyond Vaudeville* appearance, Venture smashed his head against a wall at the rear of the stage while enacting out the word "pain," opening up his gash. Covered in blood, Venture completed his act while stumbling around the stage, on the verge of passing out, all to the cheers of the crowd. Venture received a great deal of applause as he was helped off the stage and back to the dressing room, but audience

Lance Venture



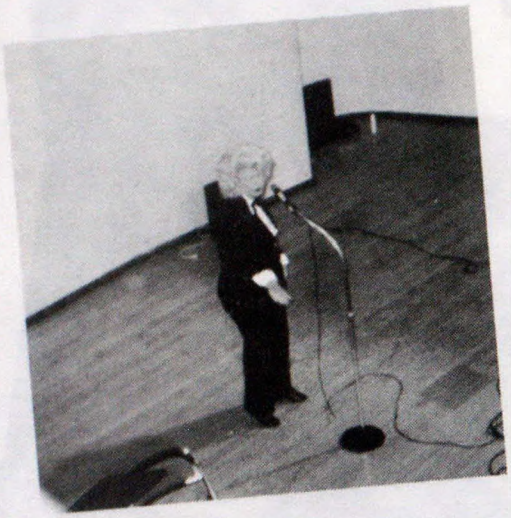




reaction to his act would be quite different in *Beyond Vaudeville V.*

Before *Beyond Vaudeville V* took place, Venture was embroiled in a salary dispute with one of the show's organizers, John Walsh. Venture claimed that Walsh promised him $25,000 to appear in the show when, in reality, Walsh had only promised him $25, the standard performers fee. Nevertheless, Venture showed up for his appearance in *Beyond Vaudeville V,* continually griping about how he was being treated. His performance that night could only be described as disastrous. First of all, there were technical difficulties with the song Venture chose to emote to, "Life In A Northern Town," by the Dream Academy. As Venture made his way onto the stage after his introduction, the tape machine containing the cassette of his song had temporarily broken down. Venture went back stage, then came out again, only to see that the machine still had not been fixed. By this time, the crowd was jeering. Finally, when the machine had been fixed, Venture came out to the stage, and began emoting to the song. Suddenly, a large number of audience members ran up to the stage, prompted by two audience members who had been pre-selected by Venture to come up to the stage. Soon, the entire stage was filled with members of the audience, and all Venture could do was to individually throw them off the stage while performing his act. By the time everyone had been thrown off the stage, "Life In A Northern Town" was over, and Venture slunk backstage, humiliated.

Instead of admitting what a fool he had been made of, Venture told everyone that the whole disaster had been planned ahead of time, that he had intentionally sabotaged his own act to get back at John Walsh. Whether he was telling the truth or not, Venture swore that he would never return to a *Beyond Vaudeville* show. Venture was still adamant about not returning when approached to appear in *Beyond Vaudeville VI,* but it'll probably be no surprise to anyone if Venture shows up in the audience still complaining about how he was treated the year before, while wishing he were still back up on stage.



BV: We're happy to be talking with the Royal Couple of Long Island Gong Shows, John and Irene Weidenburner. Folks, how long have you been performing together?
JOHN: **About twelve or thirteen years.**
BV: So you sing a number of old standards, show tunes and so forth?
JOHN: **Comedy, jokes, so forth. . . . Then we go down to Florida. We're down there for about three or four months. We appear in different places in Florida.**
IRENE: **He was singing way before I was. I really didn't start until 1977 and in '78 I was the Gong Show Queen of Long Island.**
BV: Quite an honor for a relative neophyte! I'm told that you have a very touching duet. Could you tell us a little about that?
IRENE: **We sing "If I Loved You."**
JOHN: **It's from a very beautiful Broadway stage play [*Carousel*] made famous by Gordon McCray and it's a very haunting, beautiful love tune.**

The Wiedenburners, Irene and her husband, John, have lit up the stage of *Beyond Vaudeville II* through *V.* Veterans of the Downstairs Lounge, they first appeared at a *Plague* party, and they were so impressive that they were invited to *B.V. II* later that year.

Irene, known as the "Gong Show Queen of Long Island," recalls the golden era of singers specializing in double entendre, or the "saucy number." It is a mark of both her own craft and the level at which she is held by the audience that she can perform the same song year after year and keep the crowds yelling for her return. Favorites include: "Oh Johnny," dedicated to "all of you who are named after a toilet"; "I'm Your Mailman"; "On the Goodship Lollipop"; and "I'm Returning All Your Presents But the Baby." Her vocal style is unique. Unlike some vocalizers, she is not frightened by the high notes. She is equally undaunted by the lower end of the register. As for her stage presence, it is undeniable. When Irene takes the stage, you know she's there.

Tradition has dictated that at the end of each Irene set come the words, "and now the king." This can mean none other than John Weidenburner. John, a former law-enforcement official, immediately took charge of a smoke-bomb incident at his *Plague* debut, and then switched gears to deliver some of the funniest material heard this side of the Catskill mountains. Have you heard the one about the lady who got stuck in the bathtub? The guy who broke his wife's wooden leg? The sailor who wouldn't leave his buddies behind? John's got a million of 'em. But, as any sophisticated audience knows, it's not merely the material. Timing and delivery are keys to a successful routine. John's merriment is nonstop. If a joke (rarely) fails to go over, John steamrolls straight ahead, never giving the audience a chance to catch its breath. His delivery style was obviously refined after many hours of studying the masters. A little Benny here, a little Jackie Mason there, all John Weidenburner now.

The moment all *B.V.* audiences wait for is the John & Irene duet that follows John's routine. John grows serious, explaining the deep regard he holds for the song. "If I Loved You" from the musical *Carousel*, originally popularized by Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones. Still, no one who has experienced John and Irene's version can deny that they have made it their own. The voices blend in a lovely fashion: John deep and sustained, Irene high and soaring, together producing a depth of feeling and sincerity that has left past *B.V.* audiences enraptured.

Irene and her Husband



"This waitress was so stupid. A real jerk. I ordered some Russian dressing, she brings me a picture of Kruschev putting his underdraws on." —John



IRENE ON IRENE:

"I was once chosen on a St. Patrick's Day—all dressed up in green—to draw a door prize. And while I was up on the stage, unbeknownst to me, all of a sudden, they announced I was going to sing. What could I do? I had to sing, so I sang "Oh, Johnny!" And that's the only song I sang for years. I didn't sing until very late in my life. That was in 1977. After that, I became the gong show Queen of Long Island, because I won the prize every week for being the worst. But I kept at it, and little by little I got better and better. I dragged my husband in on it."



JOHN ON JOHN:

"I've always been in Vaudeville. I used to sing. I used to sing "A Pretty Girl is Like a Melody" when all the strippers came out. I was only about 16. And if I say so myself, I do have a nice voice. Then I got interested in comedy. I'm retired from the police department—New York City—and I'm not dependent upon any particular reason for staying up here. I get a fairly decent pension. I don't have to work. We go to Florida for three or four months out of the year. We entertain down there. We go up to the Catskills also, and it's just for the fun of it.

Joseph Erdelyi Jr.





Joseph Erdelyi, Jr., 78-years-old, was born of Hungarian immigrants in the coal mining town of Pocahantas, VA. Before becoming a show business personality, the man known to millions as Uncle Sam wore many hats; to name a few, he has been a teacher, a coalminer, and a dishwasher.

Mr. Erdelyi, a New York landmark, is always in the public spotlight. On December 28, 1983, he made headlines with an impromptu performance in Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center. After the second encore of Marilyn Horne's "American Song Book" concert that evening, Erdelyi, dressed as Uncle Sam, came down the aisle and handed miniature American flags to Ms. Horne.

Erdelyi then proceeded to give flags to members of the audience in the front row. With one flag left, he waved it in the air, and asked, "Who will offer me ten dollars?" After a few moments of silence, one member of the stunned audience offered him twenty dollars for the flag. "Sir, you are a gentleman," said Erdelyi.

Mr. Erdelyi surely felt at home in the musical environment, since he plays the tarogato, a Hungarian wood instrument that resembles a clarinet. He is very proud of his tarogato, which has not been made since the Budapest factory where they were made was bombed in World War II.

One of the more outstanding performances in his career was playing tarogato in a few musical numbers with Tiny Tim on *The Tiny Tim Show* on the East Side of Manhattan at the Sutton Dance Parlor-Supper Club. Earlier, in 1960, he was a guest on ABC-TV's *Ted Mack Amateur Hour.*

And, on April 18, 1982, Mr. Erdelyi received an autograph from Michu, the world's smallest man, 33 inches tall, 36 years old, from Hungary. A performer in the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus, Michu gave the autograph at the Red Tulip Hungarian Restaurant.

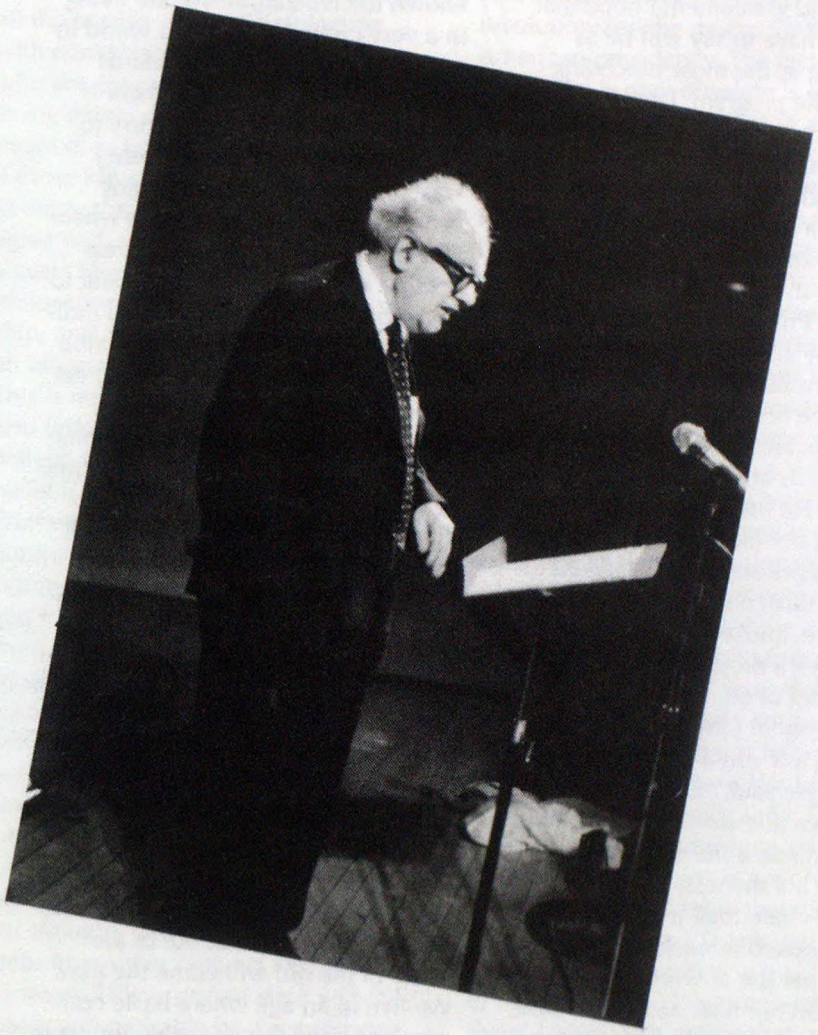
A prolific composer, Mr. Erdelyi's list of compositions includes: four versions of "The Star Spangled Banner," including one written to the tune of a Hungarian suicide love song; "Right to Life," an anti-abortion song written from the perspective of the unborn child; "The Magyars 896 A.D.—From the Urals to the Danube," a 31-minute tone poem, piano solo, describing the migration of the Hungarians from the Urals to the Danube Basin; and several 16 minute requiems, including Johan Nagy (deceased spouse of Mr. Erdelyi), John Lennon, Bela Bartok, Zoltan Kodaly, Grace Kelly, Tennessee Williams, Christa McAuliffe, and James Ellwood Jones, Welsh coal operator from the Virginia—W. Virginia coal fields.

Actress Brooke Shields has referred to Mr. Erdelyi's writings as "lovely."

Mr. Feldman

While *Beyond Vaudeville*'s lineups predominantly feature representatives of the performing arts, its organizers recognize a responsibility to the university community to inject some intellectual discourse into the proceedings. The trick, of course, was to find someone whose thoughts would not only be challenging, but who could present them in an entertaining manner. Beyond that, in keeping within the Vaudeville mold, he would have to be off the beaten path, an open thinker. To *Beyond Vaudeville*'s great good fortune, such a man was found in Joseph Feldman.

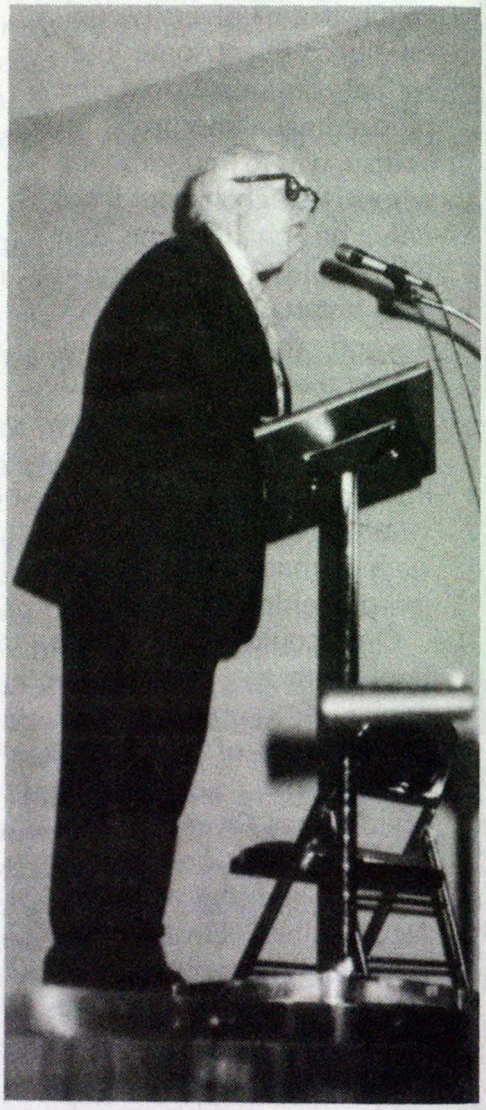
One could fill a whole book with the accomplishments of Joseph Feldman. For the sake of brevity, we call him an orator-philosopher. Over the years, he has spoken on the existence of god, the word "fallacy," Albert Einstein, the presidency, and much more. Most impressively, his remarks are never prepared before delivery. With great pride we reprint his remarks from *B.V. II*. Ronald Reagan has a team of speechwriters, but can anyone imagine his having delivered an address as challenging and inspiring as this extemporaneous one, which is merely one of four brilliant "benedictions" that have graced *B.V.II* through *V.*



BV: In a nutshell, Mr. Feldman, how would you describe yourself?
MR. FELDMAN: **Myself. That's a very difficult question. I do not understand what you mean, "describe yourself."**
BV: Are you a philosopher?
MR. FELDMAN: **I don't like terms like that. I try to be an all-around person.**
BV: A student of life, as it were.
MR. FELDMAN: **Right, right.**
BV: Oh, congratulations, by the way, on your marriage.
MR. FELDMAN: **Thank you. I call myself a philosopher, but when you put me on the spot it categorizes me. It reminds me of Edgar Guest, famous american poet, who wrote for the Hearst papers, oh, for maybe 30 years, and made a lot of money. He wasn't a bad poet, yet he had such a reputation as "Mr. Poet." Yet he had no importance at all. So, when you say I'm a philosopher . . . Even an occupation doesn't tell you anything.**
BV: True enough. So you don't like these pigeonholes that many professionals use.
MR. FELDMAN: **It's offensive!**

MR. FELDMAN'S

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope that what I will have to say will be as entertaining as the three preceding people in the program. I am fascinated, of course, by the performing arts, and I am a constant observer of every branch of theatre. I am reminded of a story that appeared in the press shortly after the end of World War II. Albert Einstein, when he lived in Princeton and his salary was paid by an unknown anonymous New York millionaire, was visited by a committee from the American Education Association that was meeting and having its annual convention in Princeton. He had a very small office and he did not like to be interviewed, but he was pressed and he agreed to meet with this committee. They came to his office, and a member of the committee—a proper dean of a famous school of education and a leading university in Ohio—said to him, "I'd like to ask you a question, Dr. Einstein." He said, "Of course." She asked him a question. He scratched his head, made a little faint smile, indicating his shyness, he turned in his swivel chair, took a book off the shelf, he looked through the book and gave her the answer. Well, she stood up on her high heels, and said, "Dr. Einstein, I thought the greatest mathematician and physicist in the world would know the answer to such a question as I put to you. He made another smile, hesitated for a moment, and said, "Madame, I do not fill my head with facts that I could find in a book. (Applause.) We live in a very difficult world. I am truly conscious of the fact that all through my entire life, each period of my development was characterized by statements from many leading people that it was an age of great crisis and a study of history indicates that there were many crises in the history of the world. But I think it's fair to say that at this point we are facing one of the greatest crises known to civilization. We are living in a very confused world; a world in which many of the old standards have collapsed and which there is great confusion. I am very sorry to say that in this university where I was a graduate student for many years and in other universities where I have studied, I have seen a great decline in education. What I want to say about education briefly will indicate my method and why I describe myself as a philosopher. I have great respect for careful work. I myself was trained as a careful documenter and searcher for facts. After a lifetime of study, of course, I have come to different conclusions. I believe that the purpose of education is not to train one to do a job; not to train one to be a technician. The basic purpose of education, the highest purpose, is to train some people—not all people—how to think. How to reason. Without a group in our society who can think and reason, we do not stand much of a chance, and, in this age, this has declined completely. I am not a pessimist. I may sound like one, but I am an optimist because I believe that out of the ashes of the old will come the new. We live in an age where basic conceptions have disappeared, and there is a lack of clarity. For example, the word, "statesman." Since we were young, and some of us are still very young, we have always heard in our schools and outside our schools that at a certain time we need a statesman. Some people think that the statesman is one that they like who's in office. Other people think that a statesman has to be someone who is a celebrity. What is a stateman? A statesman is someone who is able to rise to the situation when he has power and responsibility and do things and offer solutions that do not necessarily agree with his own ideas, but are dictated by the circumstances that exist at the time when he holds power. I will give you a classic example: Otto von Bismarck. Chancellor of Germany, who unified Germany through a series of wars. I do not



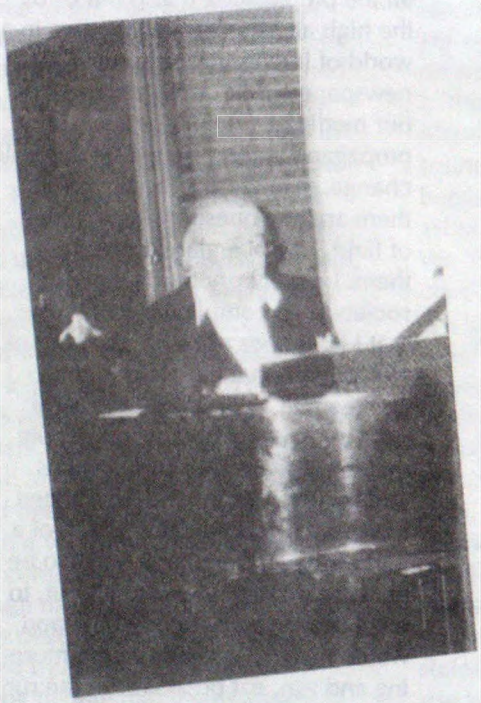
sympathize with Bismarck. He believed that only the upper classes, the nobility, was worthwhile. I do not come from the upper class and I do not have such an idea and I do not sympathize with it. But when he came to power, when he unified Germany, he offered—and not because he believed in the program—he offered the first and the greatest system of social insurance that has

ever been formulated. Some insurance, as you know, include social security, unemployment insurance, workman's compensation, health programs, and other such legislation. Why did he do it? He did it because he felt that in order to build a unified Germany and develop its strength in accordance with his conception and the conception of Germany, he would have to offer something to the masses of the population, otherwise he would not be able to build the proper morale for the kind of thing he stood for, and therefore, that's what he stood for. We do not have that today in our government. Certainly our president does not represent the kind of an individual you can call a statesman. It is not alone that we do not have it, but the confusion and the misunderstanding and the educated classes and the mass of the population is a tragic fact. I am often considered a dissenter. I am a dissenter, but at the same time I am a conservative, because I base all my work at this point in life on an analysis of the greatest works that have been accomplished in the history of mankind. It does not make any difference to me whether I agree or not. And, of course what comes to mind—and I want you to know that my remarks have not been prepared; I am speaking extemporaneously as an improvisation—what comes to mind is that this year, the 100th anniversary of Karl Marx, brings to mind the fact that Marx based his system on the Hegelian dialectic. Hegel and Marx disagreed sharply. Hegel worshipped the monarchy and the nobility, and Marx stood on the opposite end of the pole of values. But he used that and he recognized its purpose, and three years before he died he said in a famous statement that was also reported in writing, *"Je ne suis pas un Marxiste!"* He said, "I am not a Marxist!" What did he mean by that? He meant that all the people who are following me, all the people who are helping me with contributions, all the people who are organizing political parties in my name, do not understand my method. I use ideas of great thinkers if those ideas have merit and appeal to me regardless of whether or not I agree with their ideology, and that is a basic requirement of great work in philosophy, in thought, in statesmanship, and in enterprise. The basis of all ideas and all systems is the model. This is not readily understood. This is also unfortunate, because what we believe and the action based on our belief is a model, a structural model from which we derive our ideas and our theories and is the basis of our action. There are different models, and if we do not understand that there are different models and that no one has a monopoly on the model, we are lost. One of the great difficulties in the world today is that everybody thinks that Western science and Western ideas and Western mediums is the only thing that exists and regardless of the limitations of our science and our medicine and our thought, we generally disregard ideas from other cultures and other societies. This is a great error and the future will probably be a renaissance of ideas outside our development. The limitations of the model are such that if you confine yourself to the model, you are lost. Our presidency is based on a model. This model was first developed by one of the greatest men in our history, who, I am sad to relate, is neglected today: George Washington. He built the model. Our model today, three presidents have contributed most to this model. The second president to develop executive power to its highest point, a finesse in application, was Abraham Lincoln. And our model today was developed by a man of great imagination, for whom I never voted, Franklin D. Roosevelt. It was long after his death that I realized that he revolutionized the model for the American presidency. The fact that the model is now obsolete is something that is not important in an evaluation of the importance of this revolutionary change, and every president since Roosevelt has used this model, and no one has been able to change it. The fact that it probably needs change is something that is not recognized. In order to understand, in order to develop yourself, in order to get the greatest pleasure out of life in accordance with an elementary fact that every graduation is called a commencement, a beginning. That's when you're first supposed to start to develop your mind and your understanding and your ideas in order to get the maximum amount of pleasure and excitement out of life. Everybody has to develop themself and not swallow all the propaganda that is fed us by the high and by the low. We live in a world of intense propaganda. Our newspapers, our publishing houses, our media, everything is a world of propaganda, and I hope that this will change. (Applause.) Thank you. If there are any questions in any kind of field, I will be glad to entertain them. I regret very much that our society is so complex and this city that I love does not have the kind of atmosphere that they had in the Eighteenth Century or in the early days of our Republic, when people met in salons and in coffee shops and in other places and exchanged ideas. Everybody's in too much of a hurry today. They're in a hurry to be gone, to do their work, to go out, to meet their friends, to go home and watch the TV. To get up in the morning and run, eat breakfast on the run. It's a very hysterical society. We have impure air, impure water, an impure psychological atmosphere, and, therefore, the doctors thrive by giving us pills.

Bob Kline







It is no wonder that Bob Kline is known as "King of the Eighty-Eights." A professional pianist over 45 years, he is also recognized in the business as an accomplished arranger and conductor.

Mr. Kline's gigs over the years include just about every club, catering hall, temple, and restaurant in Long Island and Manhattan, with occasional travels to Connecticut, New Jersey, and Westchester. Somehow, the busy musician has found time to also serve as vocal coach, accompanist, and musical director for various organizational variety shows.

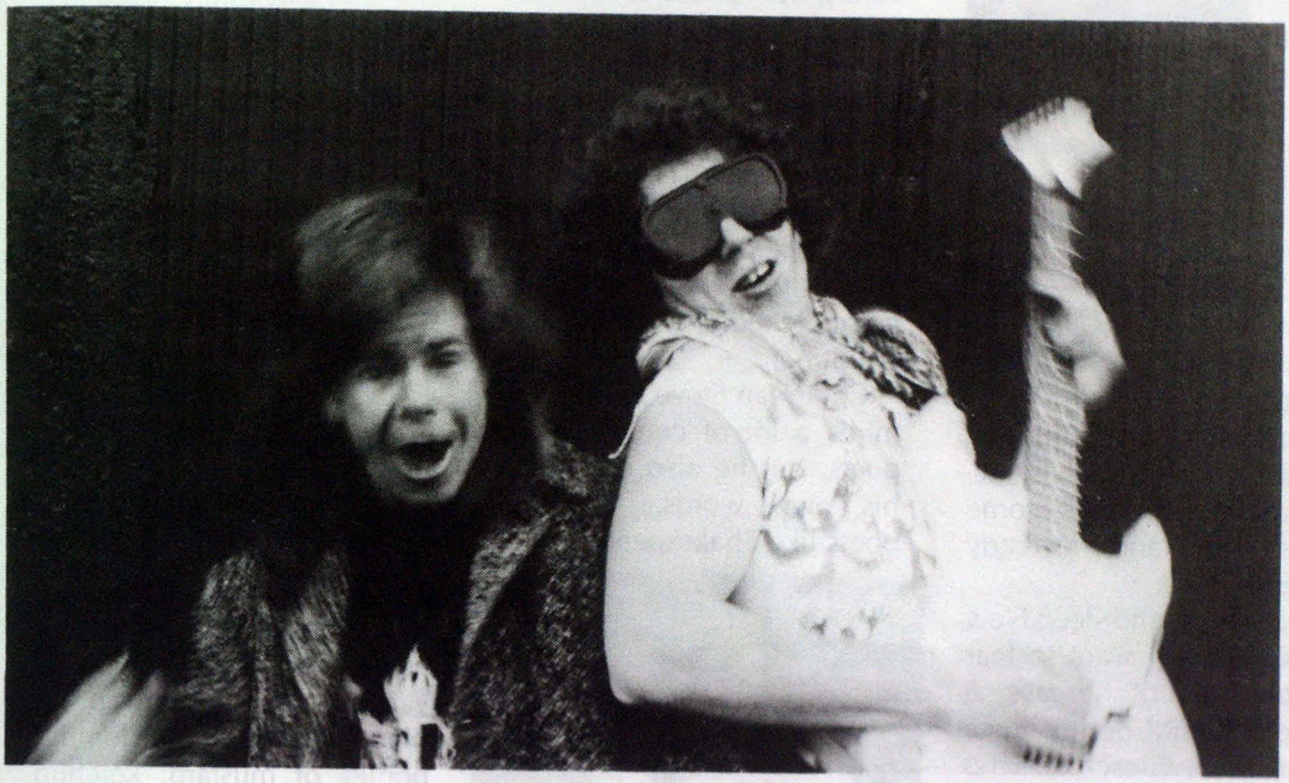
His work as a musical teacher and choral director was the result of extensive educational training. Mr. Kline is a graduate of the New York College of Music and Manhattan School of Music, and holds a Bachelor's of Music and a Master's in Musical Education.

Further graduate studies were conducted at Hofstra University, SUNY Potsdam, and the NYU School of Education.

A native Long Islander, Mr. Kline was born in Huntington and has lived most of his life in Hempstead. He spends the summer months at his seasonal residence in New Hampshire, with interests in swimming, boating, and antiques.

A member of the *Beyond Vaudeville* family since 1984, the seasoned performer explains his abilities as follows: "It's just a matter of experience and background and training and instinct and that sort of thing."

Special Guests



Omer Travers made headlines when he broke into Yoko Ono's apartment last year, but music fans know that the real news is he has become a top attraction in the music world.

His new band, "The U.F.Omerband," is playing regular gigs in Manhattan, and is taking audiences by storm. Explains Mr. Travers: "This is the hardest place in the world to make it, but if you can make it here. . ."

He recalls the night he climbed up the Dakota apartment building and broke into Yoko Ono's apartment: "Basically, I was at a party—an industry party, where you play your tape and stuff—and some girl was talking about Yoko. I go, 'What do you think of her?' And she goes, 'Oh, she's all weird and stuff.' So, when I got off the subway there at 72nd Street, I looked up there and I said, 'I'm gonna go find out. I'm just gonna go see!' That's what it was all about."

"I guess I just wanted to get known, man," he says. And known he has become. He has been featured several times on the popular Howard Stern radio program (where he introduced the soon-to-be-a-hit-single, "New York Cat"), and has played such top-flight niteclubs as Kenny's Castaways.



One can't help but wonder what a jam session Omer Travers could have had with Lennon, Ono, and Sean had he broken in a few years earlier. Imagine.

★★★★

Billy Jackit is a one man entertainment dynamo. Audiences know and love him as the genius who sings such original compositions as "Animal Erection," while strapped in a straightjacket.

"I'm definitely insane and I love to be insane, and I think that being insane is where it's

...and more Special Guests

Billy Jackit



at," says Jackit.

His record album, "Billy Jackit and The Straightjackits (Jackit Productions)" has become a cult favorite, and he's ready for more.

"I eat, drink, and sleep New York City, and I want to tear this town apart," he says. A big help should be his voice trainer, Katie Greschler, who has trained such talented singers as Cyndi Lauper and Dee Snyder.

"I want everyone to know who I am, and I'm gonna do it!," he says.

★★★★

Stephen Feinland of New York is always speaking in rhymes. He says he has been turning out rhyming meter at the rate of 1,000 syllables a day for two decades. His agent, the ubiquitous Dick Falk—who once represented a flea circus star—calls Feinland, "The most prolific, spontaneous poet in the world today."

Feinland—who calls himself Chairman Steve—has written thousands of poems and has memorized more than 10,000 lines of his work. Recently, he won the Greenwich Village Poet Laureate Contest for his poem, "Ape About Greenwich Village."

The winning poem begins: "an ape escaped from the Central Park Zoo, and didn't know what else to do, so looking around for something to eat, he scratched his way to Houston Street."

Chairman Steve says he admires a lot of contemporary poets, but he also enjoys, in his own words, "old-time poets like Shakespeare."



Chairman Steve

What really makes Chairman Steve unusual, however, is his speed. Muttering his words faster than the putter of an engine on a motorboat, he claims he can create a special poem on any subject in 30 seconds.

Poetry fans have marvelled at his work in such publications as *Cat Fancy* magazine, "The Magazine for People Who Care About Their Cats."

★★★★

One of the worst acts ever to slink onto the *Beyond Vaudeville* stage was perpetrated by a "performer" named Dean Zerbe. Zerbe, appearing in *Beyond Vaudeville I*, managed to drive approximately one half of the audience out of the auditorium with his "act." While one man played the piano, another man dumped bottles of mustard, ketchup, horse radish, among other bottled food products, onto the head of Zerbe, who was sitting on the edge of the stage. Besides having no point whatsoever, the act was about as funny as watching a 90 year old man go into cardiac arrest. At the time of *Beyond Vaudeville I*, Zerbe was a film student in the School of the Arts, currently enrolled in "Sight and Sound II." Zerbe should have remained behind the camera instead of going in front of it. He and his act rightfully deserve their place in the Beyond Vaudeville Hall of Shame.

BV TRIVIA

1) Who wrote Mason Reese's jokes at Beyond Vaudeville IV?
2) At which New York City hotel did Danny Bonaduce stay during his Beyond Vaudeville V stint?
3) Stryker was the opening act at every Beyond Vaudeville stage show except one. Name which one.
4) Who was the youngest performer ever to grace the Beyond Vaudeville stage? How about the oldest?
5) Who refused to be interviewed on camera at Beyond Vaudeville IV?
6) Which acts are featured on the Beyond Vaudeville 45rpm record? Can you name the order?
7) Who led the Beyond Vaudeville V finale?
8) Whatever happened to Cinti Laird?
9) Name the two guards who have stood watch at more Beyond Vaudevilles than any other.
10) Which Beyond Vaudeville was not attended by Steve Korn, and why?

Answers:

1) His mother
2) Hotel Earle
3) Beyond Vaudeville II
4) Youngest: Gerry Schwartz. Oldest: Lizalotta Valeska.
5) Millie Budwal
6) Side 1: Frank Moshman, Stryker, Joseph Erdelyi, Thomas Paine
   Side 2: John Weidenburner, Bert Bedell, Joseph Feldman
7) Joseph Erdelyi
8) No one is quite sure
9) Steve Roman and Scott Zwiren
10) Beyond Vaudeville IV, because he was in Israel.

LAST LAUGHS

by John Weidenburner

"This fella's out driving with his new wife. So she's sittin' next to him, and he shifts the gears and puts his hand on her knee and starts to rub her leg. She says, 'Darling,' she says, 'Don't you know we're married, now? You can go further than that.' So he drives her up to the Bronx."

"A guy comes out of Grand Central Station, he sees a lady taxi cab driver. He says, 'Take me to the cheapest cathouse in town.' She says, 'You're in it.'"

"Did you hear about this girl who went out fishing with five guys and came back with a red snapper?"

"This fella went in an elevator—Woolworth Building—crowded elevator. He gets in, walks in like this, his right arm accidentally bumps against this girl's left breast. He says, 'I'm awfully sorry my dear, but if your heart is as soft as your breast, you must be a very nice person.' She says, 'Well, listen honey, if you're 'rodney' is as hard as your elbow, I'm in room 324.'"

"This girl, she does aerobics. She does it in the nude every morning when she gets up. One day, she notices inside her thighs green rings, they're getting bigger and bigger and bigger. She goes to the doctor, she says, 'Doctor,' she says, 'I'm' sick.' She says, 'I got big green rings on the inside of my thighs.' He says, 'Are you married?' She says, 'No, but I live with a gypsy.' He says, 'Tell the gypsy the earrings aren't solid gold.'

"Why does an elephant have four feet? Because 16 inches aren't enough."

"I appeared on a bill one night with a bellydancer. She said, 'You turn my stomach.'"



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