

Comic heralds theater's new policy

Comedian David Brenner will be the opening attraction May 18-20 at the Birmingham Theatre when Central Park Properties, which recently bought the theater, begins a policy of live entertainment.

Tickets for Brenner's appearance will go on sale April 1, the date the theater will discontinue showing movies. The Birmingham Theatre, originally a vaudeville house, is at 211 S. Woodward; the box office phone number is 644-3533.

Back in May 1969, David Brenner traveled to the West Indies to make an important decision—what to do with the next year of his life. At the time, he was a successful television writer-producer-director of more than 100 documentaries and hundreds of studio shows.

He had already won nearly 30 industry awards and was earning a healthy five figure income.

WITH LITTLE else to do but listen to the radio during the three-day-long summer storm, the depressing news he heard constantly helped form his

decision. He would take a year out of his life and make people laugh, he would become a comedian.

On June 9, 1969, Brenner made his debut as a comedian at a west side nightclub in New York for free. That August he moved to his first paying job at Pips in Sheepshead Bay, where he received \$30 for five shows.

During this time, he signed with a major talent agency, and today, his signing agent, Rick Bernstein, is still with Brenner as his personal manager. Brenner had spent all of 1970 preparing and priming himself for the "Tonight Show." Several days after he auditioned for the show, Bernstein called him with the news that it was "go."

On Jan. 8, 1971, Brenner made his debut on the "Tonight Show" on national television. That appearance immediately led to the second greatest mail response in the history of the show; he received more than \$10,000 in job offers; appeared on the last live "Ed Sullivan Show" and made his debut in the main show room of the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas.

SINCE THAT day in January, Brenner has appeared almost 100 times on the "Tonight Show," including 40 as guest host. He has appeared hundreds of times on national television and appeared to packed houses everywhere.

He has played everywhere from the major hotels in Las Vegas to the top night clubs, theaters and concert halls around the country.

In 1976, Brenner was the recipient of an award when he was honored by his peers in the American Guild of Variety Artists as Male Comedy Star of the Year.

Brenner was born and grew to manhood in the tough, poor neighborhoods of south and west Philadelphia where he was class comedian.

Brenner's father was a vaudeville comedian who gave up a career on the stage for a more secure life.

To this day, Brenner gives all the credit for his timing, delivery and sense of humor to his father and best pal, Lou—"the funniest man in the world."

Brenner is close with his family, which includes his mother, his brother, Mel, a college professor and his sister, Bibi, a high school teacher. He is equally close with his childhood street friends, his relationship with Bernstein being a good example.

BRENNER STILL MAKES his permanent home base in his favorite city—New York, which he considers the most exciting city in the world. His limited, and precious spare time is spent in the company of his close friends, at a movie or museum or discotheque, or just walking the streets of his city.

As he terms it, "hanging out."

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11 Academy Nominations

• Best Picture

• Best Actress

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