

STREET CRACKS

Gottfried redefines zaniness

By Bob Sadlor
special writer

Gilbert Gottfried is more at home on stage than he is staying in the countless hotel rooms on the road. And he certainly doesn't seem very comfortable talking to reporters. "I give terrible interviews," he said, when reached at still another hotel before a show — this one in Tucson, Ariz. "A lot of times I'll be in a city and not see anything but the hotel and the club."

Once he hits the stage, however, you haven't seen anyone quite like Gilbert Gottfried.

Touted in some circles as the "most inventive comic since Robin Williams," Gottfried constantly comes at you from off-the-wall angles, with a variety of characters and impressions. But if you ask him to describe his act, you'll find him at a loss for words. "That's a tough question," Gottfried said. "I have no idea. I try not to listen to my act. It's some where between Pat Boone and the Hillside Strangler."

All the bits that I do every night are things that I actually started on stage."

GOTTFRIED grew up in Brooklyn and admits that his childhood was somewhat of a blur. But basically, he was inconspicuous in life and in school.

"I always thought that the class clowns ended up as shipping clerks," he said.

While still in his teens, he started playing in the various clubs around Greenwhich Village.

"It didn't pay anything," Gottfried



said. "I was there with 500 people with guitars trying to sing like Bob Dylan."

Eventually, Gottfried moved on to comedy gigs that paid, and things started to happen. His zaniness was spotted by MTV, which hired him to do a series of commercials. Most notable of these was a spot on how he helped The Who get its name.

The MTV commercials were the first real national opportunity for Gottfried, and through his success there, he landed more jobs, pitching items like O Henry candy bars and Banquet chicken. You may have also noticed him during a very brief appearance in a VISA commercial filmed at The Improv in Los Angeles — where they don't take American Express.

In addition to his TV work, Gottfried also made an appearance in "Beverly Hills Cop II," which he considered a major break. Recently, he has done work with comedy's latest bad boy Brooklyn's Andrew

"Dice" Clay, in the yet-to-be-released film "Ford Fairlane." He has also made frequent appearances on "Late Night with David Letterman."

Gottfried responds to the fame and accolades he has earned by not taking himself very seriously.

"IF I WAS doing comedy for myself, I'd probably walk out and ask the manager for my money back."

He's won the Charlie Award as Best Male Comedian in New York three times — and doesn't care.

"I refer to it as the 'Best Comedian Who Happened to be in Town That Night Award,'" he said. "I don't place that much importance in it. It does make a good paperweight, though."

Gottfried became philosophical when discussing the state of comedy in 1989, however. With the phenom-

nal growth of the comedy club circuit and the number of comics fighting for breaks in the '80s, he wonders what the next decade will bring.

"I think comedy will become the McDonald's of the '90s, with all the chains of clubs," he said. "I kind of wonder if the audiences will ever get tired of it. They could be tired of me already."

"I'd like to be known as the man who killed stand-up."

Gilbert Gottfried will appear this Friday and Saturday at Chaplin's East, 3424 Groesbeck, Fraser. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. For reservations, call 792-1902.

COMEDY CLUBS

Here are some listings of comedy clubs in our area. To let us know who is appearing at your club, send the information to: Comedy Listings, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

• BEA'S KITCHEN
Jim McInnis, Mark Still and Downtown Tony Brock will perform on Friday and Saturday, July 28-29, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Showtimes are 9 p.m. and 11:15 p.m. For information, call 961-2581.

• CHAPLIN'S EAST
Tony Hayes will appear on Wednesday and Thursday, July 26-27, and Gilbert Gottfried will appear Friday and Saturday, July 28-29, at Chaplin's East, 3424 Groesbeck, Fraser. Showtimes are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 792-1902.

• CHAPLIN'S PLYMOUTH
Tommy Blaze will appear Thursday-Saturday, July 27-29, at Chaplin's Plymouth in the Plymouth Hilton, 14707 Northville Road, Plymouth. For information, call 454-4680.

• CHAPLIN'S WEST
Roger Peltz will appear Tuesday-Saturday, July 25-29, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

• HOLLY HOTEL
Rob Lederman will perform along with Michael Bonner and Mark Davis Thursday through Saturday, July 27-29, at Holly Hotel, 110 Battle Alley, Holly. Show times are 8:30 p.m. with additional 10:30 p.m.

shows on Friday and Saturday. For information, call 634-1819.

• JOEY'S LIVONIA
SRO and Tim Butterfield will perform on Thursday through Saturday, July 27-29, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071 Plymouth Road, Livonia. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For reservations, call 261-0555.

• JOEY'S WYANDOTTE
SRO will perform on Sunday, July 30, at Shots on the Water, 507 Middle Ave., Wyandotte. Showtime is 9:30 p.m. For information, call 281-SHOT.

• KOMEY KORNER
John Hathbone will perform on Wednesday through Saturday, July 26-29, at the Komey Korner, 161 Riverside, west of Ouellette, Windsor. For information, call (519) 252-6848.

• LOONEY BIN
Rubin, Rubin will perform along with Ken Leslie and Ken Herrod on Friday-Saturday, July 28-29, at the Wolverine Lounge and Looney Bin Comedy Club, 1655 Gungahy, Walled Lake. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 869-9374.

• LOONEY BIN II
Stant Johnston Theatre will perform Friday-Saturday, July 28-29, at The Looney Bin at The Roxy, 9-14 and Haggerty. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10 p.m. Saturday. There's a \$5 cover charge. For information, call 699-1829.

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