

Lazer laughs it up on stage, radio

By Julie Brown
staff writer

Comedian Gary Lazer is an early riser these days.

Lazer, 32, recently started working as a radio personality at WPLR-FM in New Haven, Conn. He and another stand-up comic do the morning drive time show.

Lazer has been on the job there for less than two months. He has no other experience in radio.

"None whatsoever, that's what's so exciting," he said. "So it's really kind of an interesting experience."

Rather than taking radio personal and trying to make them funny, station staffers are having comedians work as radio personalities.

His radio program airs 6 to 10 a.m., "which is quite a change for me." He and the other comic do pre-recorded bits on a variety of subjects.

Lazer and his partner do some talking on the air and play rock and roll music. "It's very, very light and funny." They did a piece on what would happen at a Woodstock get-together in 1989. Such a gathering would include, for example, regular financial updates from the stage.

Lazer's originally from Florida, and moved to New York to attend New York University. He earned a bachelor's degree in fine arts with a concentration in theater.

Acting is part of Lazer's professional background. He stayed in New York City after graduation and did some "off-off Broadway."

He started auditioning for comedy performances and has worked for about seven years in stand-up comedy, including three or four years as a full-time profession.

BEFORE THAT, Lazer waited on

tables, sold shoes, "the stereotypical kind of stuff in New York."

He's found that stage time is the key to perfecting his craft. Whether there are three people in the audience or 100, stage time is what counts.

Lazer's done work for MTV, including "Gary's Guide to Comedy." He's noticed that at parties, partygoers who make others laugh are encouraged to pursue careers in comedy. The work is often seen as below the level of what it is.

"There's just been such a saturation of comedy everywhere," he said.

And that's had an impact on audiences. Audiences used to be more receptive, but now there's more of a "make me laugh" attitude, Lazer said. He recommends that audience members pick and choose carefully. There are so many people working in comedy now, and some material is better than the rest.

"I think that's a danger in the business," he said.

Lazer writes his own material, a job he finds both rewarding and difficult.

"That's the hardest part of the whole job. Performance is great."

He bases his material in part on what he reads in newspapers. Personal observations form the basis of much of his work.

He writes about things that affect all of us, "dealing with everyday life. There's so much going on in the world right now, I think laughter is a way to release that."

CRIME, THE weather and other performances appear in Lazer's performances. He's found audiences are receptive to his approach.

His job at the radio station includes doing the news. Lazer's get-



tting a bit more topical in his comedy work, incorporating some of that news material.

His comedy work takes him throughout the country. On weekends, he must fly out Friday night and return Sunday.

"I like the Midwest area . . . Chicago, Michigan." He also enjoys audiences in New York and Los Angeles.

Lazer's found audiences in the South are the least receptive. He sensed hostility there, as if those people still held a grudge over having lost the Civil War.

He's getting used to working early morning hours at the radio station.

COMEDY CLL

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 Schoolhouse, Livonia 48150.

• BEAN'S COMEDY KITCHEN

Jeff Brannon will perform with Tommy Chan and Tony Edwards Friday-Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at Bean's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Showtimes are 9 p.m. and 11:15 p.m. For information, call 961-0555.

• CHAPLIN'S EAST

Jay Charbonneau will appear Wednesday-Saturday, Aug. 30-Sept. 2, at Chaplin's East, 34244 Croesbeck, 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

Tom Hayes will perform Thursday, Aug. 31, at Chaplin's Plymouth in the Plymouth Radisson, 14707 Northville Road, Plymouth. For information, call 454-4800.

• CHAPLIN'S WEST

John Rathbone will appear Tuesday-Saturday, Aug. 29-Sept. 2, at Chaplin's West, 16890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

• HOLLY HOTEL

Ruben Hoben and Michael Bonner will perform with Steve Balmer and Brian Gaskins Tuesday-Saturday, Aug. 21-Sept. 2, at Holly Hotel, 110 Battle Alley, Holly. Showtimes are 6:30 p.m. with additional 10:30 p.m. shows on Friday and Saturday. For

information, call 634-1891.

• JOEY'S LIVONIA

Michael Blackman will perform along with Chris Rich Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, at Joey's Comedy Club, 1650 Plymouth, Livonia. Showtimes are 9 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For reservations, call 261-0555.

• LOONEY BIN

Tim Butterfield will perform Friday-Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at the Looney Bin, 1655 Clemency, Walled Lake. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10:15 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 669-9374.

• LOONEY BIN TOO

Lowel Sanders will perform Friday-Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at The Looney Bin, 1655 Clemency, Walled Lake. Showtimes are 9 p.m. Friday and 8 and 10 p.m. Saturday. There's a \$5 cover charge. For information, call 659-1529.

• MISS KITTY'S

Al Katz will appear with Andrew Ford Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, at Miss Kitty's Comedy Club, 1650 Plymouth, Livonia. Call 261-0555. Showtimes are 8 p.m. Thursday; 9 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 628-6500.

• HOLLY HOTEL

Ruben Hoben

and Michael Bonner

will perform with Steve Balmer

and Brian Gaskins

Tuesday-Saturday, Aug. 21-Sept. 2, at Holly Hotel, 110 Battle Alley, Holly. Showtimes are 6:30 p.m. with additional 10:30 p.m. shows on Friday and Saturday. For

information, call 634-1891.

• MAINSTREET

Gay Lazer will perform Friday

and Saturday, Sept. 1-2, at Main-

street Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Lib-

erty, Ann Arbor. For information,

call 996-0080.

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