

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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Comics learn to put punch in their lines



Jonathon Round, artistic director of the Laugh Academy, maintains there's a world of difference between the unschooled off-hand funny remark and serious stand-up comedy.

By Victor E. Swanson
special writer

IF YOU WANT to be a comedian — a professional comedian — there's a man you should meet, Jonathon Round. When he has to be funny, he can be. But when it comes down to the business of comedy, Jonathon Round is a serious man.

And when he talks about his Laugh Academy, a school for teaching would-be professional comedians, he's straightforward, no-nonsense, extra-serious.

"There are three levels," Round said in the empty comedy room of the Comedy Castle, in Berkeley, where the Laugh Academy classes are held. "There's the novice level, wherein we'll bring folks in and find out about their sense of humor and how they've seen things, what kind of attitude they have toward life."

"We may introduce them to a couple of writing techniques, joke writing forms, character analyses and so forth. We'll work with them on principles of delivery, elements of timing and pacing, rhythm. We'll have them develop comedy characterizations."

"The intermediate level is set up for those who really want, who really want to continue on after the novice

ice and really polish some of the things that they've laid in."

Of those who finish the novice level, Round said: "Some people, they say, 'Well, good. I've got the basics, here. This is what I needed. Thank you, very much.' And there's no problem with that."

And he added this about some people who go on to the intermediate level: "There are some who enjoyed working with me as a director and want to stay on a little bit and get the kind of coaching that we can afford to be able to do in the intermediate level. That's what it's structured to do... to reinforce and go on with what you've learned in the basic."

"Both of those classes are only 30 clock-hours over 10 weeks each. So it's a 60 clock-hour course, if you take both the novice and the intermediate level. The price on each of them is \$150. The same kinds of classes are going on out on the coasts, with three days' worth of classes selling for four and five hundred dollars."

The first session of the final level, the master level, is being put together. It's set to be a two-day 12 clock-hour course. Round said that it will be a seminar in which professionals in the business, such as agents, man-

agers, union representatives, and casting agents, will come and speak.

Round, who can be funny when he wants to be, said without even a hint of a smile, "There are no people who are born comics. People learn to be comics. Being a comedian is more than being a class clown."

"One of the things I'm fond of saying when I make announcements for registration drives is, 'Go see "Punch Line," then come see us!'" a Hollywood view of what happens with comics. Some of the terrible things that happen with the comics as in "Punch Line," the near nervous breakdown on stage — all those things — are completely avoidable. It's a matter of preparation, learning the basics."

"Fact is, we all have to get up and write four or five hours a day, whether or not we feel like it, whether or not we're inspired. And God help you if one day after you've been doing this for a while, you wake up and feel like you're just not funny anymore. We lost Freddie Prinze to just exactly that kind of a thing. We lost John Belushi to just that kind of a thing. They didn't know how to stop were doing it, and they didn't know why. They had no basics to go back to, no real form to be able to sit

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table talk

Joins Kingsley

Michael Russell has joined the Kingsley Inn (which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary) as executive chef. He is one of five Certified Master Chefs in Michigan and was a Gold Medal winner on the U.S. National Culinary Team, which recently returned from the Culinary Olympics in West Germany. Before joining the Kingsley, he served as executive chef for the Travis Pointe Country Club in Ann Arbor. Fresh smoked salmon is a specialty of Russell's that he intends to add to the Kingsley menu.

Customers cook

Hot rock cooking over a granite stove, where the customer cooks on a rock at the table, is being offered at Clamchiggers in Farmington Hills. Restaurant manager Jim McIntyre says this type of cooking has been done in European restaurants for hundreds of years. Sauces or oils are not needed. Customers may order the lobster — each serving includes three-quarters of a pound of three types of lobster — or the fish charrill.

Free dinners

The Berkshire Hotel in Southfield is offering hotel guests free breakfast, afternoon tea — and dinner. Catered by the Merchants of Vino, the free dinners are served 6-9 p.m. in the hotel's lobby. Purpose is to promote the upcoming Jimmy's Grill, a 46-50 seat pub-style restaurant, which will open at the Berkshire early next year.

Panda opens

A restaurant called the Panda, with authentic Chinese food, is new to West Bloomfield, in the Drake Summit Shopping Center at the location that used to be the Wildflower, then the Drake, then Oliverio's. Service is "Trader Vic style," or the team system. A buffet with mostly Chinese foods is served Sundays. Tropical drinks are available. Hours are 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, noon to 9 p.m. Sundays. The restaurant is owned by Paul Leung and Associates. Leung also owns the Oceania Inn in Rochester Hills.

Pizzeria uno

Pizza-maker Richard Roberts has brought his Pizzeria UNO restaurant to West Bloomfield. The new restaurant features the "original" deep dish, Chicago-style pizza. Seating is for 160 people, including the bar. A full, diversified menu is served from 11 a.m. until late at night seven days a week. This is the second Pizzeria UNO in Michigan — the first is in Ann Arbor.

2 editions

Entertainment '89, new version of the coupon book published by Entertainment Publications Inc. of Birmingham, for metropolitan Detroit, has expanded into two editions — one for the central north/west area and one for the east/northeast area. Each book sells for \$30 and includes coupons for dining out (such as one free dinner with one purchased) and various other entertainment activities. South Oakland and Western Wayne counties are included in the central north/west book. Both editions include coupons good at individual restaurants and

other places close to where book-holders may live or work. Some downtown Detroit, Windsor and Detroit suburban spots are included in both books. Restaurant coupons range from "elegant dining" and "exciting dining adventures" to "casual dining and ethnic fare" and "dine informally or carryout."

Entertainment Publications, founded locally in 1962, is the nation's leading publisher of entertainment books on leisure activities, dining, travel discounts and promotions. Books may be ordered through philanthropic and community service organizations (such as the Michigan Adoptive Parents Association, phone Ken Wagner at 464-2050), from listed retail business, or Entertainment's office at 1400 N. Woodward, Birmingham 48011.

Fish in a bag

Charley's Restaurants in metropolitan Detroit are cooking "Fish in a Bag," using a European method. Call on papillote. Inside the paper bag the fresh fish is lightly steamed in a wine garlic butter sauce. It's topped with fresh vegetables and dill. This new menu item is available

at Charley's Restaurants in Bloomfield, Southfield, Northville, Farmington Hills, Harper Woods and Livonia.

Caucus Club

New Year's Eve at the Caucus Club will feature two seatings for dinner, one 5:30-9 p.m. and from 9 p.m. to closing. Entrees include: chateaubriand bouillabaisse for two, roast duckling with fresh brunched cherry sauce served with wild rice; broiled Australian lobster tails; veal tosa served over an herb tomato sauce. For reservations, call 965-4970. Jim Bajor, New Age pianist entertains 5:30-8:30 p.m. Live entertainment and dancing at 9 p.m. The Caucus Club is at 150 W. Congress, Detroit.

Westin holidays

The Westin Hotel Renaissance Center offers a meal on Christmas Day between noon and 8 p.m. Entrees include: charbroiled steaks, seafood, chicken, traditional holiday fare. The hotel's 11th annual New Year's Eve party runs from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. in the Renaissance Ballroom.

Festivities include a live broadcast by Power 96, party favors, champagne toast, hors d'oeuvres and cash bar. The price is \$28 per person, \$160 per couple. Package includes a Westin room. Reservation payment is advance required.

Dinner at the Summit restaurant will have two seatings on New Year's Eve — 5:30-7 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. First seating must complete meal and leave by 10 p.m. For details, call the Westin Hotel Hotline, 567-XMAS.

Younger patrons can breakfast with Santa at the Westin at 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 17. Breakfast includes scrambled eggs, french toast, blueberry muffins, sausage, bacon, chocolate milk for children; coffee for adults. Prices are \$7.45 for children and \$8.55 for adults.

Great pretenders

Once again AAA offers recipes for non-alcoholic holiday drinks. This year's Great Pretenders come with such monikers as Chimney Sweep and Marley's Ghost. The 20-page booklet available through AAA offices includes 20 such drink recipes.

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