

August 31-September 6, 1992

## MDA Telethon to Entertain, Educate

TUCSON, Ariz., July 24, 1992—For the 27th year, American TV viewers will be treated to an annual Labor Day labor of love—the MDA Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon. Beginning at approximately 9 p.m. EDT Sunday, Sept. 6, and continuing for 21½ hours, the live broadcast will feature its traditional blend of stellar entertainment and information about neuromuscular diseases and MDA's battle to defeat them.

Starring show business legend and renowned humanitarian Jerry Lewis, the Telethon's entertainment lineup will offer some of the brightest stars of film, stage, nightclub, television, music and sports, as well as some surprises. The show will originate from the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas, with satellite feeds from other locations across the country.

The Telethon will also feature

profiles of adults and children who are served by the Muscular Dystrophy Association's programs, and will update viewers on scientific advances achieved by MDA's worldwide research program during the last year.

More than 80 million viewers annually watch the Telethon, which is carried by more than 200 "Love Network" stations across the United States and Canada. In addition to enjoying great entertainment, viewers phone in pledges of support for MDA's programs of research and services to benefit more than a million Americans with 40 neuromuscular diseases. Last year's Telethon garnered a record \$45.1 million in pledges and contributions.

Lewis is considered the most effective fund-raiser in history for his more than four decades of volunteer

leadership of MDA. He's best known for hosting the Telethon each Labor Day, but works for the Association year-round.

World-renowned as an actor, comedian, director, writer, producer and headline entertainer on stage, screen and television, Lewis has starred in nearly 50 films, including "The Nutty Professor," "The Bell Boy," "The Errand Boy" and "The King of Comedy." He wrote and directed many of his comedies. His television acting credits include the dramatic series, "Wiseguy," and the movie, "Flight for Life."

Box office gross receipts of Lewis' films total about \$800 million, making him one of the most successful performers in show business history. The Disney Channel this year broadcast a series of programs based on the "Colgate Comedy Hour," the TV show in which Lewis and Dean Martin starred in the early 1950s.

The only entertainer ever to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, Lewis has also received the Jefferson Award from the American Institute for Public Service; the Legion of Honor and Commander in the Order of Arts and Letters, France's two highest awards; the U.S. Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service; and numerous other humanitarian awards.

The first MDA Labor Day Telethon was broadcast by one TV station in New York in 1966. Lewis was joined by stars including the Muppets, Joe Namath and Sammy Davis Jr., who would become a Telethon stalwart. Ed McMahon, still Jerry's Telethon co-host, made his first appearance in 1968.

The Telethon was aired coast to coast for the first time in 1970. Noted performers in the next decade ranged from John Lennon to Mickey Mouse. In 1976, Frank Sinatra surprised Jerry by bringing Dean Martin on stage for a touching live reunion of the former partners.

Show business's biggest names continued to grace the Telethon in the 1980s. In 1986, comedian Billy Crystal's moving monologue about a friend who used a wheelchair brought in the greatest telephone response in the show's history. Ringo Starr brought his All-Star Band, featuring classic rock stars, to the Telethon in 1989.

Leeza Gibbons became a co-host in 1990 for the 25th anniversary show, which Jerry dedicated to the memory of Davis.



William Russ plays a businessman who decides to pursue his musical dreams once more in *Middle Ages*, a new CBS drama previewing on Monday. The series also stars Peter Riegert.

© 1992 Time Inc.