

Comedian finds his voice with 'He's the Man'



By KEELY WYOMNIK
STAFF WRITER

Sometimes a song changes everything. Sean Morey has been singing, and making people laugh for a long time. Now "He's the Man" with a radio hit, "The Man Song," and a growing following of fans.

"I'm doing great, we're making money," said Morey who will be performing this weekend at Joey's Comedy Club in Dearborn. "I've never been to Detroit before, but we're getting a lot of airplay. We have fans there. It's really great, they all have my sense of humor."

Morey always had songs, but "The Man Song," and CD "Sean Morey - He's the Man" hit a nerve. "It's a self-deprecating humor," he said in a telephone interview from L.A. "There's a joke every single line."

Because, as Morey sings, "What I say, goes around here, right out about my head. I don't want to hear a lot of whining! ... so I'll shut up. The sooner you learn who's boss

Sean Morey
When: Friday-Sunday, Oct. 2-4. Performances 8:15 p.m. and 10:45 p.m., Friday-Saturday, 7 p.m. Sunday.
Where: Joey's Comedy Club at Pilsano's, 5070 Schaefer, Dearborn.
Tickets: \$12 Friday-Saturday, \$10 Sunday, call (313) 584-8885.

CD: Sean Morey's comedy album "He's the Man" contains nine comedy songs and a "live" stand-up comedy show. It can be purchased only by calling Sean Morey Productions, 1 (800) 96-SONGS. Check out Sean Morey's Web Site www.seanmorey.com

around here! ... the sooner you can give me my orders, dear. Cause I am the head honcho!...but it's all in my head." Morey has mastered the art of "taking something little that affects you and exaggerating it."

For example, on "Prison," "Did you know that it costs \$40 thousand a year to house each prisoner? Jeez, for 40 thousand bucks a piece I'll take a few prisoners into my house! I live in Los Angeles. I already have bars on the windows."

Part comedian, part actor, part writer, Morey says it's all about breaking down the third wall so that his audience is part of the show. He even makes up a song about the audience. With an eye on his audience, Morey tries to strike up conversations, and believes they always have something to contribute. His 1-1/2 hour one-man show includes stand-up comedy, songs and improvising with the audience.

"I like writing, creating, that's the most fun for me," he said. "I Did It My Way" is a parody of "I Did It Her Way," a parody of "I Did It My Way," and having a blast. "I love my job," he said. He's been making people laugh since he was 8 years old, and growing up in South Jersey. In high school he fantasized about becoming a comedian but went to Northeastern College instead, where he studied speech communication and journalism.

"I started out as a street entertainer," he said. In the mid-1970s Morey started his own comedy school in Boston, and performed a one-man show every Friday at the Charles Playhouse. He moved to LA in 1979, and won first place in the Southern California Comedy Competition. This led to appearances on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson."

The response to his humor was positive, and soon Morey was performing as the opening act on Crystal Gayle's national tour. He also wrote and performed on Gayle's prime time CBS Special, and wrote and performed on NBC's "The Big Show."

Twice nominated College Comedian of the Year, Morey has been seen on various TV shows, and on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno."

He's also working on a second CD. "We hope to start recording it this week at the Ice House," he said. "It will be great."

Hilberry, SRO present mysteries

Hold onto your seats as you enter a murderous world where there is a killer on the loose and everyone is a suspect or possibly the next victim in "The Mousetrap" by Agatha Christie. Hilberry Theatre Company's season opener on Friday, Oct. 2. (See related story on front)

An eerie, English manor terrifically sets the stage for this mysterious melodrama. As new innkeepers, Giles and Molly Ralston are welcoming guests to Monkswell Manor for the first time. As the unique and colorful group of guests arrive, each more peculiar than the last, the time is right for the murders to begin.

As victims begin being found and the snow keeps piling up outside, it becomes clear that one of them must be the murderer and that none of them can escape. The pressing question is not only whodunit, but who's going to be done next.

Set design is by Larry Knushansky of West Bloomfield, lighting design is by Tom Schrader of Beverly Hills, and costume design is by John Woodland of Royal Oak, all of whom

are members of the Wayne State University Theatre faculty.

"The Mousetrap" runs in repertory through Dec. 3 at the Hilberry Theatre, corner of Cass and Hancock in Detroit. Performances begin 8 p.m. Thursday, Saturday, and 2 p.m. selected Wednesday and Saturday matinees.

Tickets range from \$10 to \$17, call (313) 577-2972 Monday-Thursday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. for details.

Also of note:

■ SRO Productions presents Ira Levin's "Deathtrap," 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, beginning Oct. 9 at the City of Southfield's historic park "Theburgh" on the northeast corner of Civic Center Dr. and Berg Road. Tickets \$8 general admission, \$7 senior adults and children under 12, call (248) 827-0701.

Levin has created a story of jealousy, deception and murder. Levin leads the audience to believe one thing is taking place only to change completely months later.

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former movie theater and before that a synagogue, in the early 1950s.

The Hilberry was started in the late 1950s as a Stratford style repertory to train graduates in classic theater, which originally meant Shakespeare. Thomas said that over the years the definition of classic has been expanded to include everything up to such modern masters as O'Neill, Ibsen and Shaw. This year's Hilberry schedule does include a Shakespeare play, "Hamlet," and Moliere's "Scapin," and a variety plays in a wide range of theatrical styles.

"We try to have a snappy show to open and close the season, a blend of comic and serious, plays with different styles," Thomas said.

The "snappy" plays this season are Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap" and a new work about railroad car manufacturer George Pullman, "American Enterprise."

"We depend for about 10 percent of our income on school matinees. That plays a role in selection of at least two plays," Thomas said. "Every Tuesday, school students are brought in for these plays. Plays from Shakespeare, also plays they

would be reading in school. This year it's "Hamlet" and "A Tale of Two Cities."

Thomas said the school matinees draw between 13,000 and 15,000 students a year from more than 100 Detroit, suburban and outstate schools through a grant from the Skillman Foundation.

"The mission of the university as an urban university is outreach," Thomas said. "We feel out school programs play an important role."

A selection committee is formed in the fall to go over a pool of hundreds of plays submitted by faculty, students and administrators for the three theaters. Final selection is usually completed by December for the following year.

The Hilberry is a competitive graduate program with 80 students studying acting, promotion, management and production specialties. Auditions for the acting company are held in January in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Detroit. This year the 18-member acting company will include many new faces due to a large graduating class last year.

Support for the theater pro-

grams is generated by the volunteer Understudies, a group of 50 city and suburban women who organize fundraisers and provide other support. In addition, public attendance at the theaters has been growing. Thomas said that last year the theaters set a record for revenue.

"We've been able to market and expand our patron base," Thomas said. "We're figuring out that we can offer something to the community that makes us attractive - variety of programming and bargain cost."

Thomas said Hilberry is held to the same professional standards as productions at the Fisher, Masonic, Detroit Opera House and Meadow Brook.

Highlights of the season at the Hilberry include a new staging of Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities" and Jeffrey Sweet's "American Enterprise."

"A few years ago the Hilberry did 'Nicholas Nickleby' to great success. It was difficult finding an adaptation that satisfied until we stumbled on this one last year. This is not a two-part epic like 'Nicholas' but it is a large production on that order," Thomas said.

"American Enterprise" deals

with issues that have been central to the Detroit area for generations. Sweet explores the conflict between George Pullman's utopian ideals and the rise of the American labor movement, leading to one of the worst strikes in labor history.

At the Bonstelle, the season opens with "Dracula" and will feature a special Halloween performance. This year's holiday play will be "Little Women," replacing "A Christmas Carol."

"The Studio is where we do more edgy, contemporary plays," Thomas said.

This year the schedule includes works by Sam Shepard and Athol Fugard. The plays are usually directed by a graduate student with undergraduate actors.

Thomas came to WSU from Florida State University in 1994. His comfortable office at Wayne's historic Old Main is lined with Russian theater posters, a reminder of his work as coordinator of a cultural exchange program between Florida State and the Moscow Art Theater.

The refurbished Old Main is now home to the university's art programs, which Thomas said has encouraged a lot of cross discipline cooperation.

Hootie from page E1

realization that if Darius opens his mouth, people are going to know it's us. We decided that we shouldn't restrict the music side of it."

Rucker even brings a new aggressiveness to his vocals, like the growl in "Bluesy Revolution."

"I felt like the last album had some pretty aggressive stuff. He's feeling pretty upbeat on this album," Sonefeld said of Rucker. "He doesn't write in them, but with this one, there's a little more of a theme of con-

tentment."

"When you listen to the whole album, you can tell he's more at ease now."

Hootie and the Blowfish will return to the area Saturday, Oct. 3, and again will bring along percussionist Gary Greene and keyboard player Peter Holsapple. The band will play a bit of musical chairs itself, swapping instruments on several songs.

"I've come out of my shell," Sonefeld explained about playing

acoustic guitar, bass, and Hammond organ on a few songs at the August "Q Concert for a Cure" show at the Phoenix Plaza. "I've always collaborated on the songs but I just never, for whatever reason, didn't need to get up and play in front."

"We have a free-flowing stage setting. I love getting up. It gets a little boring back there."

With three albums worth of material, Hootie and the Blowfish offer several cover songs throughout its set. There's 54-

40's "I Go Blind," Led Zeppelin's "Hey, Hey What Can I Do," Toots and the Wet Sprockets' "Nothing," the Doobie Brothers' "Long Train Running," Tom Waits' "Closing Time," and Kiss' "Doctor Love."

"We play a good diversity of songs from night to night. There's some longer sets too, now that we have the ability to play that 2 1/2 hour set."

But, he said, he guarantees the band will open with a Hootie song.

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