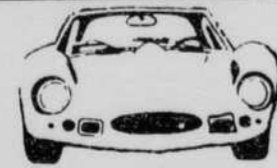


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On The Air

By Joeth Zucco
 Senior Editor

As one show winds down to the tune of "I spent my last 10 bucks on birth control and beer" another show winds up to:

"Good evening and welcome to the 'Six Ways From Sunday Show' broadcast live from the spacious KZUM studios high atop the sewer systems of downtown Lincoln at 10th and O streets with your hosts King Kaos and Mr. Danno. Also starring Al Lacart live from the Pharoh Room at the Phantom Hotel! Plus comedy from the toy studio immediately following This Date in History at 10.

"And now, here they are . . . King Kaos and Mr. Danno."

It's 9:30 Thursday night at KZUM and the "Six Ways From Sunday Show" is on the air.

The studio seems to be in as much kaos as the King himself. A little boy is running around setting off rocket fire with a little black box. Dee-jays play musical chairs and generally set up as the show progresses.

The intro comes to an end and all is calm. King Kaos and Danno take to the airwaves. Tonight's musical theme is famous songs by other musicians. After a few opening statements, the show starts off with the Beat Farmers rendition of "Karma Chameleon," originally recorded by Boy George.



The show is coming upon its first anniversary in June. King Kaos said he and Danno started doing comedy for the "Magic Dragon Theater" with Marty Wells on Monday nights. The two left when they got their own show. King Kaos said they wanted to gear their energy toward one show instead of two.

Between the two, King Kaos handles the creativity and comedy while Danno does the editing, production and "technical stuff." There is a third member of the team, von Eric, who doesn't go on the air live, but appears vocally on the taped skits.

The three meet on Sundays to tape the skits. With King Kaos' vast library of comedy records spanning back to the 1930s and up to the present and Danno engineering experience, the two create vintage-sounding radio comedy, commercials, and situation comedies.



The show is essentially put together day by day, King Kaos said. Ideas for skits, jokes, or conversation between songs come to him at random times, he said.

The listeners are getting their share of famous songs. Up to now, Devo has done their tribute to Elvis with "Don't Be Cruel." Trio has done the famous Little Richard song, "Tutti Frutti," the Beatles have done a cover of "Mr. Postman" by the Marvelettes and Instant Funk has covered "Hard Day's Night" by the Beatles.



The red light flashes and the phone rings in the background. King Kaos comments that one of their three regular listeners is calling. Actually, they said they don't know how many people listen, but they do get their dose of positive feedback.

King Kaos said he doesn't know where comedy will take him, but he might stay with it in radio. He said that it's a good testing ground for other projects he's done.

Groucho Marx is King's most prominent influence. He said he is drawn in by the unique brand of humor -- "they don't care."

"I like a lot of the old radio comedy like Jack Benny. I liked radio script writing back then. It's a good testing ground for t.v."

Danno claims to not have any influences.

"He's our straight man," King Kaos said.

The two met during Fire Prevention Week, Danno said.

"He was on fire, I put him out," he said.



The hour and a half show is coming to an end. Mark Knoffler and Chet Atkins strum "Imagine" by John Lennon, the Dead Kennedy's slash out "Viva Las Vegas" then The Beat Farmers honor Led Zeppelin with a medley of its hits.

The atmosphere has tensed up as they try to get their last songs on and the last skits played out. As 11 p.m. approaches, another night of comedy goes down in the book.

"The preceding was a copy-righted feature and may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the written consent of the 'Six Ways From Sunday Show' . . . far out."

Punchlines for nothing, Jokes for free

By John Bruce
 Senior Editor

New comedy, like any potentially marketable product, must be tested.

So for no charge, the Harris Labs of Humor lends its stage every other Monday night to a comedy workshop -- a forum for local talents to try their trade.

It's hip, it's musty, it's got vinyl seats; but most of all, Duffy's Tavern has got something different.

Starting around 9:30 p.m., Eastern Nebraska's aspiring comedians perform a mixture of stand-up comedy and humor skits spiked with crowd participation and crowd abuse.



For the audience, the night offers cheap humor and reasonable drinks; for the comedians, the night offers one more chance to chase a dream.

Red Tolnai says that the comedy workshop grew out of an "open mike night" in which anyone could jump on stage and do a stand-up routine. Now Tolnai and seven other young comedians appear regularly at Duffy's to experiment and try new material.

Material that works will be waxed and polished, punchlines will be adjusted and then the new and improved jokes will be taken to professional comedy clubs like Noodles, where comedians get paid for being goofy.



All eight comedians perform solo routines as well as group skits. According to Reg McMeen, who was waiting backstage in a little red dress, the comics get together on Sunday nights before the workshop to think up new ideas. However, he said, much of the show is improvised.

Some of the members are relatively new to the group. Others, such as Mark Patton -- "no relation to the general" -- are veterans of the Lincoln comedy scene. He started "Bad Comedy Night" a few years ago in a Haymarket pub. The comedy night caught on and was very successful, he said.

But with the influx of professional clubs, "Bad Comedy Night" went the way of the slide rule and long guitar solos.

Tolnai said one problem with the comedy workshop is that no one knows it exists.

"There's a definite lack of press," he said, "we need more people, a different crowd!"

Patton agrees the comedians would like to see a larger crowd. However, he said, seeing the same audience every other week forces the comedians to come up with new routines.

But ultimately, it's the audience that benefits. The jokes are free. Many are even funny. And best of all, there is very little juggling.



One improvisational sketch involved two comedians placed in a hypothetical comical situation. The two pit their comedic abilities against each other, both racing for the punchline -- the comical jugular. Next, someone yells freeze, and one of the comics is replaced by another who sets up a new situation. Ideally, the audience will laugh.

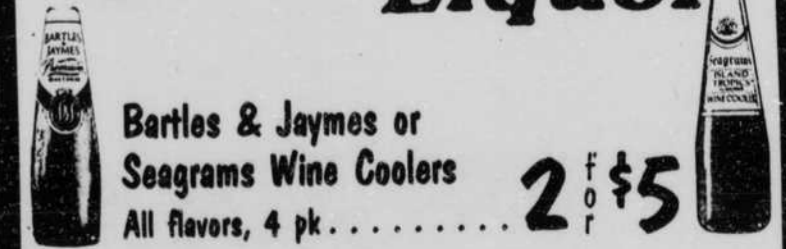
Bob Nelson contributed to this story



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