

The Middle Man

THE CABLE BOY by Anderson Jones

Stand-up comic Jason Stuart sounds ecstatic on the phone. And why not? He just has finished a successful swing through Atlanta clubs. And the weekend before we get to talk, he has screened his new TV special, Jason Stuart: Making It to the Middle, for Funny Boy Films.

It's a concert show that documents "what it's really like to be on the road," Stuart shares over the phone from his West Hollywood-adjacent home. "It's the radio shows you have to do early in the morning, and getting rides from club owners in their cars sitting in the back next to child seats, hauling your own bags."

Stuart is hoping Funny Boy, home of the entrepreneurial DIY filmmaker (Adam & Steve, Latter Days), will help him take his act to Showtime, Logo, or Here! "or there, will do nicely, thank you. He already is doing cool things on the big screen, so it won't be much of a stretch.

West Hollywood is hosting a premiere of Coffee Date, a sweet, gay romantic comedy that's indie-produced. It stars the well-toned, toffee-colored body of Wilson Cruz. Stuart costars. Catch it. The film is making the rounds at queer fests nationwide.

Maybe you've caught Stuart doing his thing on Will & Grace; as Damon Wayans's shrink on My Wife & Kids; on House; or on The George Lopez Show. He's pretty easy to identify.

"I'm always the manager," Stuart tells me. "I'm in charge, and yet, no one will listen to me. I wonder what the hell that means?"

You can catch Stuart soon on Logo's stand-up comedy series Wisecrack, taped at WeHo's favorite watering, er, hole, The Abbey. He's in good company. So far, the show has featured the likes of gay comics Alec Mapa and Miss Coco Peru.

Great exposure, surely, but Stuart needs a weekly platform on TV on a show like, say, Lost. After all, it's the most progressively cast show on television—and next to Grey's Anatomy, perhaps the most gorgeous. As Stuart likes to say, "I've got a joke about Lost. It's about a plane that cracks open, and all the Ford Models fall out."

Stuart does have a serious question for the producers: "I can't believe they don't have a gay flight attendant. And I think it should be me. I wanna run up to the survivors and say, 'I found this plant on the other side of the island, and I can make moisturizer with it!'" (Sawyer, by the way, is the cast member he most would like to, uh, moisturize.)

In many ways, I'm with Stuart. Not about Sawyer. It's just that TV and pop culture itself are feeling very weird to me.

Are you like me? Are you trying to figure out why some TV characters aren't gay? Like, what's up with all the ambiguity? Hello?

George on Grey's Anatomy? Or, the brother/manny of Julia Louis-Dreyfus (The New Adventures of Old Christine)? Or, quite frankly, the former Dr. Doogie Howser on How I Met Your Mother. Isn't he just a little too interested in his Prada shoes? Or, for God's sake, why doesn't Charlie Sheen just dynamite Jon Cryer's closet door on Two and a Half Men. I mean, come on! Don't even get me started on Jackass: Number Two. The flying dildos. The beer enemas. The puppet show?

We're way, way beyond metrosexual these days. What's weird is that audiences are finding the closeted or kinda gay guys the most popular. Perhaps because they're the most familiar to people in their own lives? Is a Golden Age of Gays on TV dawning? Even now that The Golden Girls and Designing Women are in syndication?

One of the brothers on Brothers and Sisters is a sister. Everyone except maybe the cast of Class knows that one of the characters on that show is married to a gay. It's supposed to be funny.

Stuart is not amused.

"I think there's less gay stuff now," Stuart remarks. "Now, we've got The L Word and Noah's Arc—of course, that's a fantasy world—but they were never really there to begin with. Straight people play 85 percent of the gay roles. Sam Pancake's out and funny on Lovespring International, but he's playing this weird role of a married guy in the closet, and nobody seems to think it's strange. It creeps me out."

Of course, Stuart adds, with a laugh, "I've never really played a character close to me, either. Except on House."

Stuart played a straight guy, who—wait for it—was a hypochondriac.

That's show biz, kids.