

## Scary, but funny times

Comic Jason Stuart worries about the nation  
by Kaizaad Kotwal

Columbus □ Jason Stuart is thrilled to be the first openly gay comic to perform at the Funny Bone, but he is concerned about the nation. Stuart was just leaving his salon in Los Angeles after a haircut and a healthy dose of political chat when he paused for an interview by phone. One thing emerges over many conversations with him: he is certainly a very political person. He is also consistently hilarious.

“This is a scary time in our history,” he began, referring to the current Bush administration and their actions to date, both domestically and internationally.

Talking about the California recall which Arnold Schwarzenegger won, Stuart said, “I am a diehard Democrat and I voted against the recall.” “I am amazed,” he continued, “that we spent 23 million dollars we did not have. I am an actor and a comedian and have never been in the habit of spending more money than I have had.”

Not that Stuart was a huge fan of present governor Gray Davis. “I don’t see how Arnold will be worse than Gray,” he said, “because they both are of the privileged sort and don’t understand the problems you and I have.”

Stuart is set to headline the Funny Bone Comedy Club in Columbus from November 19-23 with his latest stand up comedy show, “My Big Fat Gay Jewish Comedy Tour.”

He just completed a co-starring role with Faye Dunaway in the movie Kill Switch, an independent film in which he plays an Geraldine-esque talk show host who ambushes Dunaway’s character on a TV show. The film also stars Sean Young (Blade Runner, Ace Ventura) and Tony Goldwyn (Ghost).

Dunaway has an almost mythological reputation for being a difficult actress, but Stuart said she was “nothing but professional and great.” “She was on the set in character,” he said, “and she was like Superman to my Lois Lane. She put her arm around me and we flew as actors working together on a scene.”

Stuart is known for his recurring role as Dr. Thomas, the gay shrink on the ABC sitcom *My Wife & Kids* starring Damon Wayans.

“I loved that role,” Stuart said, “because here was a gay character telling straight couples what to do to better their relationships.”

He’s also appeared on *Will & Grace*, *The Drew Carey Show*, *Charmed*, *Providence*, *Murder, She Wrote* and HBO’s *Gia* with Angelina Jolie. Stuart said that, although he loved the *Will & Grace* cast who were very gracious and professional, the editing process left much to be desired.

“It’s like being on *Survivor*,” he joked. “They cut and cut till you’re practically not there.” He said *Will & Grace* is a “very tight ship with people aboard who really appreciate their success and fame.” He found that Damon Wayans allowed him to “be more funny, be more creative” during the process of shooting, though.

Recently, Stuart had a dramatic role in an episode of the Lifetime Network’s series *Strong Medicine*, which is produced by Whoopi Goldberg. Stuart plays the role of a host on a cooking program.

Last year Jason completed a dramatic role in another indie film, *Letting Go*, by filmmaker Barbara Daoust, playing the role of a man in the late 1980s who finds out he is HIV-positive and decides to die with dignity and grace.

Stuart said, “I have been looking forward to doing some serious work and growing as an artist and an actor.”

Stuart, as star and producer, and Michael Gallant, as producer and director, won the Best Picture Award at the Barcelona Gay and Lesbian Film Festival for their film *10 Attitudes* last summer. The romantic comedy co-stars Alexandra Paul, comedienne Judy Tenuta, David Faustino, Sean Kanan, Lydia Nicole, Sheila Kay, Mitch Hara, Scott Kennedy and Jim J. Bullock. Stuart said that the film will be released by the end of the year.

Stuart describes this film as a “Julia Roberts meets Woody Allen meets MTV’s *Real World* kind of film and it asks the question: Can a real gay guy find true love in L.A.?”

Before his *Columbus* shows, Stuart will be cruising. Not for a pickup, but performing on a ship in the Caribbean for ten days. The cruise, not

a gay one, was looking for “someone who appealed to both straight and gay audiences alike,” said Stuart.

“So by the time I come to Columbus,” he joked, “I will look fabulous!” Stuart is constantly working on new material and the “Big Fat Gay Comedy Tour” will not flinch from the controversial stuff like war and Osama bin Laden.

“Really,” he said, “what is wrong with our intelligence when they can’t find bin Laden, a six-foot-three guy attached to a dialysis machine?” He will also include material about his parents, about dating, and also about getting older—“I hate it! It’s the worst!” He acknowledges that he looks better than he has ever looked, but he still abhors the idea of aging.

Stuart has also always been very open about his relationships and his desire “to find a husband.” Currently single, Stuart said he longs for the day when he can find his mate so that he can finally sing the popular tune, “I Finally Found Someone.”

Getting back to politics, I asked him if President Bush has a good chance of getting re-elected.

“Gosh I hope not!” he exclaimed with a gasp. “I have no idea what any gay man will want with more of any kind of bush for four more years.” Catch Jason Stuart November 19-22 at the Funny Bone Comedy Club at Easton Town Center in Columbus; call 614-471-5653.