

SMACK DAB IN THE MIDDLE

By Richard Davis

Openly gay comic Jason Stuart is set to headline at The Improv Comedy Show at Harrah's in Las Vegas, April 22-27, 2008. QVegas spoke with him recently while he was performing at Parliament House, a gay resort in Orlando, Florida.

Stuart says that he was the first openly gay performer to headline mainstream comedy clubs. He said, "Even now there aren't that many openly gay comic headliners." Stuart's stand-up comedy special Jason Stuart: Making it to the Middle, is airing on here! TV through April 24. ("People ask, 'How in the hell do I get here! TV.' Call 1-888-HERE-NOW"). The TV special is a showcase for Stuart's rapid-fire stand-up comedy act, but it also documents Stuart as a man in the middle of his life, in the middle of his career. He said, "I always thought I'd be as famous as Barbra, either that or end up as Lil' Kim's wig washer. But all I made it is to the middle." Stuart has also just completed an episode of Everybody Hates Chris, playing one half of an hysterical auctioneer couple, "Lonnie and Donnie." The episode will air as the show's Mother's Day episode in May, 2008.

As an improv comic, Stuart loves talking with his audience. "That's my gift," he said.

"Interviewers always ask about hecklers," Stuart said. "People think I'll be heckled and my life will be over. Heckling is usually done in good fun."

Stuart is set to take a dramatic role as the lover of a man who commits suicide in the play, Biking with Andrew Scott, a dark comedy by Debbie Bolsky and directed by Chris Holder at Hollywood's Write Act Repertory Theatre. Biking opens with previews on April 4 and 5, with the main run April 10 through May 17.

Stuart has appeared in several film roles and was just cast in a leading role in the

noir drama Casebook filming in black and white from filmmaker Darian Lane. His best-known film role is as Clayton the demented office manager in the gay indie Coffee Date. Stuart was nominated for a Glitter Award for Best Supporting Actor for the role. The film is now available on DVD. Stuart said that playing dramatic roles is easier than doing comedy. "Being funny is much harder," he said. "Comedy is black and white. You're either funny or you're not."

Stuart is actively involved in gay community causes. His here! TV special's Hollywood premiere at the Showcase Theatre will benefit the Lifeworks Mentoring Program (www.lifeworksmentoring.org).

Stuart says, "Lifeworks offers one on one, peer, and group mentoring opportunities for GLBT youth by providing positive and affirming role models."

Stuart is also the chairman for the Screen Actors Guild LGBT Committee, whose members include George Takei, Alexis Arquette, Craig Chester and Lea Delaria. The purpose of the committee is to provide support to LGBT actors and to educate the membership, the industry, and the public on LGBT actor's issues, with a focus on ending discrimination against LGBT actors in the workplace.

As for his personal life, "I need a husband," Stuart says. "Any one, as long as he has a job and a car, and doesn't live in the car. Write me at www.jasonstuart.com." Stuart says, "I have this insane born again Orthodox Jewish family. Me? I'm a cultural Jew? I complain and diet. I have a 33-inch waist? really. I have been on Jenny Craig since 1980. Sometimes I get so hungry, hey give you seven days of food and I eat it in five days."