

## Up Close & Personal

by March Jacobs

### Jason Stuart :

Lots of new projects keeps comedian busy

Ask anyone who are some of the busiest, most "out there," and diversified comedians in the U.S. today and without a doubt, Jason Stuart would be near the top of the list. With a recurring role on ABC's sitcom "MyWife and Kids," a newly released CD titled "Gay Comedy Without a Dress," a returning guest appearance on "Will and Grace," and recent guest shots on "Charmed," "Providence," "Three Sisters" and "The Drew Carey Show," as well as a starring role in the romantic feature film comedy, "10 Attitudes" being featured in film festivals and due to be released later this year, Jason Stuart says, "Things are going very well, better than ever! This is what it's all about!"

Jason will be returning to St. Louis' Funny Bone, at Westport, on March 20-24, with his new show entitled the same as his CD, "Gay Comedy Without a Dress," which is available for purchase only on his website at [www.jasonstuart.com](http://www.jasonstuart.com). "It was recorded at the Acme Comedy Company in Minneapolis, which is one of my favorite venues, as is the Westport Funny Bone in St. Louis. I am just so thankful for the support of the gay and lesbian community in St. Louis because they have always been there for me, sometimes selling out 8 days solid, when no one else knew who Jason Stuart was."

Jason is sporting a "new look" which comes from the fact he's been working out with a trainer for the past 4 or 5 years, with a renewed vigor to "push myself farther than I ever thought I could go" and it's working! He has new material, new insults, that he targets poor unsuspecting members of the audience with. He also has new exciting projects that he's working on, which he's letting EXP readers be the first to hear about! "Along with my new manager and producing partner, Bonnie Dore, we've bought the options for a book by William Mann named "Wisecracker" based on the story of Billy Haines, the

out silent film star of the 30s, to make a movie about his life. I'm also involved in the development of a project, with a very well known talk show host, who I can't name at this time, for a syndicated talk show in the near future. So I'm very excited about these new opportunities.

Jason is also excited that he was invited back to "My Wife and Kids" in a recurring role from last season for three episodes this year. "I play a gay shrink who helps straight people with their problems and God knows, they need it." In one of the episodes, Jason's character tells the show's stars, Damon Wayans and Tisha Campbell-Martin as he's counseling them about their marital problems, "It's like my Joseph and I always say, together we can lick anything." Jason is also set to return to Will and Grace in an upcoming episode in a role he played last year, as the high strung manager of "The Duplex," where Jack, played by Sean Hayes, does his show, "Jack 2002." About these exciting opportunities for a gay actor to play gay characters on nationwide TV, Jason says, "I guess it's my turn and it feels great!"

Jason's movie career includes his dramatic debut in "Southern Man," now available from Vanguard Video. In it, he plays a teacher who mentors a student and is murdered when the student's abusive father mistakenly assumes the two are having an affair. It's one of his favorite roles. Another movie in which he has a starring role is "10 Attitudes," a romantic feature comedy film now making the rounds of the film festival circuit. It deals with a gay caterer, Josh who has moved from Idaho to Los Angeles only to be jilted by his long-term lover for a "younger man" in WeHo. A close friend challenges Josh that he can help him find his "Mr. Right" in 10 dates, hence the title, "10 Attitudes." Jason's real life mother plays his mother in the film and sums up the premise for the movie: "At the end of the day, we're all just looking for the same basic human need—to give love and find someone who will give it back in return."

I asked Jason what he thought about Rosie O'Donnell coming out of her closet officially. "I'm thrilled! I could not be more happy. It's

already helped her tremendously. Then I asked him if he thought it would have the same negative effects on her career like it did Ellen DeGeneres. How can you say it hurt Ellen? She's hosted the Oscars, and did a fabulous job, she's had her own HBO special, she's had another successful show, and she's toured the country to sold-out shows... Ellen changed the face of television and I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for her and what she's done. Rosie is going off the air, but it's her decision after six successful years. She'll still have her Rosie Magazine, she's been on Will & Grace, and will continue to be an important voice for gay America. Jason was one of the pioneer celebrities who came out nationally on Geraldo's TV show.