

Middle Man

Out comedian Jason Stuart laughs his way through a mid-life crisis in his new standup show

By: John Sullivan

Whether it's in his standup comedy act or through the many characters he has portrayed in dozens of films and television shows, Jason Stuart has no problem being out, loud and proud. The openly gay comedian and actor delivers the laughs with a brutal honesty that leaves even the most jaded among us holding our sides.

Stuart, who has made appearances on shows like Will & Grace, Everybody Hates Chris, House M.D. and My Wife and Kids, brings his unique brand of comedy to the Parliament House's Footlight Theater for one show only on March 15 at 8 p.m. We caught up with him by phone, and he brought us up to date on what's new?and old?in his life these days.

WATERMARK: I hear that you have your first comedy special for television premiering soon.

JASON STUART: I just finished something for Here! TV called Jason Stuart: Making It to the Middle that will be on from March 28 to April 24. It's me doing my standup but it's also about me in the middle of my life and the middle of my career, and we did it in the middle of the country. It's my first TV special, and I'm very excited.

I caught you on LOGO the other night in Coffee Date with Wilson Cruz and Deborah Gibson.

I really enjoyed working with those people. Deborah Gibson was a real sweet kind of girl from your neighborhood. She actually came to see my show at the Laugh Factory one night, and we hung out and that was really nice. I also went to see her do this AIDS benefit, and she did a version of "I'm The Greatest Star" from Funny Girl, and I was just shocked because I had never seen anyone do anything Barbra did so well.

What's it like to be in the middle of your life? And are you going to tell me how old you are?

Oh God, why do you want to know that? It's so depressing. Do you have to print it? Do you have to remind me? Because, you know, being 36 is so hard! [Laughs.] That's what I am? I'm 36. I hear that 36 is the new 26.

[Coyly] How old do I look?

From the pictures I've seen on your Web site, I would say you look 36. Or less??

Oh, I think I love you. And that's what I'm afraid of? I'm afraid that I'm not sure of a love that there's no cure for. If I sound a little low-energy today it's because I have a little bit of the flu. So forgive me, and don't say I'm sick in the article because no one wants to hear that [laughs]. You never know how it will sound? "Jason Stuart was under the weather, but he still came to the phone."

I even canceled my therapy tonight! I'm in group therapy, and basically it's a how-to-find-a-boyfriend workshop. Speaking of therapy, what do you make of young Hollywood and all the DUIs, rehab and bad mothering? and how it all plays out almost instantly via the Internet?

They're just not as good as our old stars [Laughs]. They're just not as interesting.

A while back I did an interview for AfterElton.com, and somebody asked me if I'd ever had an affair with somebody famous. Of course I said yes, Alejandro Rey [an Argentine actor famous for his turn in the sitcom *The Flying Nun*], and I had an affair for around a year when I was in my twenties. He was my second boyfriend.

So they wrote this thing, and Perez Hilton got a hold of it and put it on his Web site, and then *The National Enquirer* did a full page on it, and

if you look on my Web site, you can see it for yourself. I was just sort of shocked that they gave me a full page in the Enquirer. I just pulled it up, and here it is? "Flying Nun Star Secret Gay Life Revealed."

It's so funny that anyone would care what I had done.

I was at Sundance at the Entertainment Weekly party, and I was hanging out with two of the actors from Brothers and Sisters, the ones who play the gay one and the drug addict. They told me that Sally Field had heard about that because someone sent her the Enquirer, and she said, "I had no idea he [Alejandro Rey] was gay." Isn't that so weird?

How much of your standup is prepared material, and how much is just off the cuff?

Well, that's my gift, I think, the improv. I don't think I'm the greatest writer or the greatest this or that, but I think my gift is improv. But it is harder to do the improv with gay men than it is to do with straight people. I think gay men in general are just as funny as I am [laughs], so I have to be really good. It keeps me on my toes trying to be good enough for the gay boys.

What can we expect from your Orlando show? What are you going to bring for us?

Funny, sexy, provocative and available!