

Jimpressions

By Jim Meskimen

Photo by Phil Proctor

Around about 1985, when I was just starting my acting career in New York, I got it into my head to create a one-man show.

Seemed like the thing to do. I saw a friend of mine do it, and it didn't seem too hard to do...

For that first show, I put together about forty minutes or so of improvised characters, some songs and a bunch of impressions. I remember having my friend Dan Jablons play a Don McLean song, which we sang together.

I also improvised a Sinatra song for the first time, (something I was later to do on a weekly basis with the group INTERPLAY for hundreds of shows.)

Over the next 25 or so years, I have continued to polish that same basic show.

On March 25 & 26, 2011 the latest incarnation, JIMPRESSIONS was launched at [The Acting Center](#) to two very enthusiastic sold out houses, standing ovations and very encouraging comments.

I basically haven't really changed what I do over the years, but I have refined and organized my unusual talents so that a specific result happens: an amused, entertained and INSPIRED audience.

The age range of people who claim to love the current show is 11 to 84 years. That seems like a good spread!

I love to do impressions; I'm always on the lookout for more celebrities to mimic, to expand my already sizable repertoire (there are about 65 different voices in the current show, from Simon Cowell to Paul Giamatti to G.W. Bush) and so Act One is made up of a journey through dozens of voices that are arranged in order of sound, category, geographical origin, or just whim, and presented in full retro 70's vibe.

Dan Jablons, who was with me in that very first show, accompanied me once again on opening weekend for my Bob Dylan tribute. Now that's continuity!

I also love to present my alter ego, Professor Knestor Jackdaws (of Oxmouth College.) His impromptu lectures on art and culture, including demonstrations of his Virtual Museum, are always an unpredictable delight for audiences. And it gives me a chance to make rather subversive commentary on modern culture, while also indulging my interest in art history... or art "Mystory."

Act Two of JIMPRESSIONS therefore consists of a “lecture” by the professor, including his rendition of an original song, sung as an homage to the fiendishly clever and often risqué Sir Noel Coward.

My purpose with this show is more definite than ever before, which made it easier to create: I’m attempting to demonstrate creativity and skill, invention and humor, and an appreciation of human expression, in order to “beat the drum” for creative people to continue to make a better, more enjoyable world.

That seems like the only way out of our current challenging situation to me– to be creative, and to have fun expressing life in a positive way, with laughter and art.

I’m assisted in this in no small measure by my dear friend, Tait Ruppert, who is a magnificent director and has contributed a lot to the quality of the current production.

I used to just design my one man shows mainly to be silly, hilarious, unpredictable, and, hopefully, memorable. Now, if opening weekend was any indication, I am accomplishing the same thing with a purpose I deeply believe in, and I couldn’t be happier with the result.

After 25 years, I’m getting closer to an ideal entertaining show. A LOT closer. I hope you agree!

The End