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MICHAEL SADOWSKI
Pocono Record Writer
April 30, 2007



PoconoRecord.com
'Weird Al' Yankovic

First, there is the "Weird Al" Yankovic you see in videos, on TV shows or in his cult-fave movie "UHF." The one who acts like, well, a weirdo.

Then there is plain-old accordion player, former high school valedictorian Al Yankovic, with his wife and 4-year-old daughter, who has made a lucrative, 25-year career out of mocking the pop culture landscape.

The one that shows up Friday for his show at the Sherman Theater? That'll be the weirdo.

"It's a multi-media show with a lot of production," Yankovic said during an interview last week. "It's very theatrical, a lot of costume changes and film clips and, of course, a high energy rock show with the same band that I've had since the very beginning. There's obviously going to be a lot of stuff from the new album and a few surprises."

The 47-year-old singer recently watched his latest album — 2006's Straight Outta Lynwood — be certified Gold. It was his first album to open in the top 10 of the Billboard charts as well after having huge success ripping on Madonna, Nirvana and favorite whipping boy Michael Jackson.

The album is missing one song, however, after a disagreement over the use of a parody of James Blunt's 2006 megahit "You're Beautiful" — to be changed to "You're Pitiful." It was to be the first single off Lynwood.

Yankovic said Blunt signed off on the song, but that Blunt's record label, Atlantic Records, stepped in and asked Yankovic to hold off on releasing the album because they believed it could be damaging to Blunt's career. Yankovic complied.

Months later, Yankovic called Atlantic, which did a total 180 and said they didn't want the song on the album at all.

"Now not only had they delayed my album, but I didn't have a single," he said.

Luckily, Yankovic then recorded "White and Nerdy," which he said turned out as a better lead single anyway for the album.

"I think it Atlantic did me a favor, but at the time I was pretty upset with it," he said. Atlantic officials did not return a message for comment.

It's not the first time Yankovic has tasted someone's scorn. The classic tale is Yankovic's hit "Amish Paradise," a take-off of 1995 rap-star du jour Coolio's Grammy-winning "Gangster's Paradise."

Coolio went public with his thoughts about the parody — to put it lightly: he didn't like it. But more than 10 years later, the two seem to have at least gotten past the incident.

"I ran into Coolio actually a year or two ago at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, and at that point, I hadn't had any contact with him for well over a decade, and I heard he was in the building, and I was a little apprehensive about it," he said. "He came up to where I was signing autographs, and he started

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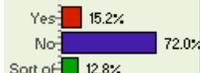
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signing his autograph on my picture. And then we gave each other a hug, and it was a big --- it was a Kodak moment."

Yankovic's presence at the CES, one of the world's biggest tech shows, is no surprise, especially since he's one of the major artists to embrace just about everything on the Web.

When Atlantic thwarted his attempt to release "You're Pitiful," he released the song and the video privately on his own Web site. And although videos may be a thing of the past on MTV, his video for "Trapped in the Drive-Thru" has received millions of hits on Yankovic's personally maintained MySpace page www.myspace.com/weirdal and YouTube.

"The Internet sort of levels the playing field, anyone can get their material out there now," he said.

But it comes with its pratfalls. Dozens of people have parodied Yankovic, and they keep showing up on YouTube and other sites.

Yankovic has gone out of his way to tell his fans those copycats aren't him.

"Because a lot of these songs are vulgar or just not very good, it certainly doesn't do me any favors to have my name attached to them, so that's a bit of a problem," he said.

Music piracy? Fine by AI, unless . . .

"I don't have a problem with people illegally downloading music from the internet," he said. "I just have a problem when it's mine."

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