

By ROB CARROLL – rcarroll@shawmedia.com

Character actor Larry Miller serves up laughs, cocktails at Raue

Variety is the theme of character actor Larry Miller's career.

Miller has done stand-up comedy, a weekly podcast and written books.

Now, in his one-man show, "Cocktails With Larry Miller," he shares his perspective on marriage, children and drinking. He brings his show to the Raue Center for the Arts at 8 p.m. Nov. 26. Leave the kids at home, though, because the show is only suited for adults 18 and older.

The character actor, who has had roles in "The Princess Diaries," "Pretty Woman," "The Nutty Professor," "Seinfeld" and a long list of other movies and TV shows, somehow recently found enough time to talk to Sidetracks while stuck in traffic on the way to the airport after wrapping up shooting an episode of "NCIS."

Tell me about the show you're bringing to Crystal Lake.

That's the theme of it, "Life is a Cocktail." That's a big theme in life ... I'm very lucky. I love show business. I love the purity of stand-up. I've been very lucky because of stand-up. But this show, it's theater. There's tens of thousands of beautiful theaters all over the country just like the Raue ... If you do a one-man show, it combines everything I like best.

Is there a reason you keep doing stand-up and stage shows rather than just acting?

Comics say, "oh, [performing live is] just fantastic. It's almost sexual." I've never felt that way. The whole concept of live performing is getting deeper. It's just wonderful. I do love acting ... I have a family. I'm not away a ton, but it's a big part of the way I make a living ... In a sense, it's really a great, great honor ... If you do it well, it's really a wonderful gift to bring to people.

Is acting still a challenge for you after playing so many roles?

Oh golly, Lord. Yesterday, it was great. This "NCIS" is a huge hit ... I hope to keep doing the acting. And if you're a character actor like me, and by the way, I define a character actor as anyone in a movie not kissing Renee Zellweger. ... It's no baloney. I'll be as happy on stage at the Raue Center as I am on any set.

When people recognize you in public, which role do they recognize you from?

It's very gratifying when people get to know you ... It's like putting bricks in a wall. As a character actor, every role is a brick. And one day they drive by and say, "hey, look at that wall." ... I like that. I'm very lucky.

What made you want to start doing a podcast ["This Week With Larry Miller"]?

I went on Adam Carolla's on-air radio show, and we just enjoyed it ... All I knew it was really great comedy to make sketches up and riff with him and it didn't pay anything ... After a couple of months, they asked if I wanted to do my own show ... It's a great forum. It's like jazz to me ... I hope to always be open to things like podcasting.

You were writing some. Are you still doing that?

Not as much ... I love tweeting as well [@LarryJMiller]. Tweeting to me is a great exercise. It's like a haiku when trying to write a great line ... In a sense, I would find things in my stand-up act that I wanted to write differently. A one-man show is as different to stand-up as an organ is to a piano. They look similar, but they're different ... It's just a different kind of writing to do. It made me say, "I want to do something in addition to, not instead of, stand-up" ... [The show] is actually equivalent in depth to the other things I do.

That's all I have for you today. Thanks for taking time to talk to me.

Don't be silly, This is an equivalent thing, I love doing press. It gives you something, but it also promotes my show.

"Cocktails with Larry Miller"

WHEN: 8 p.m. Nov. 26

WHERE: Raue Center for the Arts, 26 N. Williams St., Crystal Lake

INFO: \$48, \$45, \$42 at www.rauecenter.org or 815-356-9212.

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