Wayne Brady finds musical improv a draw despite recession; Lachey: new album will be different, 'cause h

by Marilyn Beck & Stacy Jenel Smi

Musical improv master Wayne Brady is happy to report his show in Vegas "Making It Up" is as strong as ever. And they say these are dire times! Not for the people who like to laugh!

"I've been doing the show in Vegas for the last two years, so you can pretty much say it's going well. You don't stick around if something is sucking," notes the multi-talent who rose to fame on "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"

"It's wonderful to be able to do a different show every night because it's an improvisational musical piece. It's definitely one of the more unique shows out there," he says about his musical variety show, which is entirely improvised based on audience suggestions. "It's a nightly challenge to me, but at least I never get bored."

The hard-working entertainer is also keeping busy this summer with his "A Long Time Coming" music tour, and is gearing up for all new episodes of his Fox show, "Don't Forget the Lyrics," which returns to the lineup May 22.

"We got a lot of celebrity guests that came on for charity, like Meat Loaf, who was a blast. We also had 'Baba Booey' from the 'Howard Stern Show,'" he says. "The show has really caught on like wildfire across the country and even around the world. I've been on tour in Europe doing concerts, and they've got the show there and then Australia, New Zealand and Singapore, so we're doing something right."

Nick Lachey

THE INSIDE TRACK: "I'm getting ready to put an album out in May," Nick Lachey tells us of his latest project "Coming Up for Air." "I'm going out on the road visiting a lot of radio stations right now doing promos for it." While his style of music remains the same, Lachey says there are definitely some differences with this album because he's been in a different emotional state. "You approach each album with a different perspective. It depends on where you're at in your life," he notes. "I think the last one was very specific to a particular time in my life. This one is a little more broad. It's a little more upbeat. I think musically it's more programmed in terms of the production. There's a little less live instrumentation," he adds. "I don't think it's a huge departure from my last album, but every album differs depending on where you're at when you're writing

them."

ON THE PERSONAL SIDE: Laurel Holloman, who has spent the last five years on "The L Word," tells us she's trying to be smart about her next big project, but it's hard being away from home when you're a mom. "My baby is still a year old. I want to be with her all the time, but I'm out there looking for the right thing. We'll see what happens," says Holloman, who adopted her daughter Nala Belle in March of last year. "I think when you're on a series for a long time, it might need to die down for a little while. I think it's easy to get worried about what's going to come up, and then you take the wrong thing, so I'm trying to be smart."

Luckily for Holloman, she feels like she's grown as an actress since starting the Showtime series, and she hopes to take what she's learned to her next role. "It taught me to be really loose and to work at a different speed because I had come from film. I fought really hard to arc my character and not have her be too repetitive. You saw her go from hiding behind somebody's identity to coming into her own," she notes of her character Tina. "I also learned that if you really fall in love with your character, really fight hard for what you believe would be a good arc. I think I'll definitely take that when I do any other job."

BLOODY GOOD SHOW: William Sanderson, who plays the sheriff of a town inhabited by vampires on HBO's "True Blood," admits, "I don't know how much longer I'll survive. To be honest, there's not much on Bud in the books," he says, referring to his character, Bud Dearborne, and the Southern Vampire Mysteries by Charlaine Harris, from which "Blood" is being drawn. (No pun intended.) The show returns to the tube for its second season in June. Notes Sanderson, "I'm too timid to ask, 'Am I getting killed off?' One producer I'd worked with before on 'Deadwood' told me, though, 'Not before the eleventh episode,' because he was directing that one.'"

The veteran character actor, remembered by TV fans as Larry of "Newhart's" Larry, Darryl & Darryl â€” and for film roles including the Toymaker in "Bladerunner" â€” says he's having a blast working on the series that stars Anna Paquin. Some days, he admits of his decades-younger cast mates, "If you're shooting 'til 4 or 5 a.m., you think they may be joking when they talk about going home and making dinner or playing with their kids. But they're not. I worry about them sapping their energy." All that youthful vigor can be intimidating, he acknowledges, "but I'm not intimidated by anyone when it comes to talent. Not to sound conceited. Don't ever get your talent mixed up with your salary â€” I hope I never forget that."

With reports by Emily Feimster.

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