

Inside the world of Dean Martin.

DINO

MAGAZINE

Dean and Jerry dish
up one final helping
of laughter in...

CLASSIC MARTIN & LEWIS

FILM FUN

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF
THE DEAN MARTIN ASSOCIATION



ISSUE 440
AUG/SEP 2026
a not-for-profit
digital publication

MEMORYHIVE

*The Wild and
Woolly World of*

Martin & Lewis

**WE CONCLUDE OUR CELEBRATIONS OF
80 YEARS OF LAUGHTER**

ON AIR + THE DICK STABLE STORY + DEAN & JERRY'S TOP 5 + MORE!

ABOUT

THE DEAN MARTIN ASSOCIATION



Founded in 1960 and now in our seventh decade, we are proud to be the first and only officially authorized independent, flagship organization dedicated to Dean Martin in the world. We are non-profit: we receive no funding or donations.

Our Chairperson until his sad death in December 1995, Dean personally sanctioned the DMA's creation 66 years ago, enabling us to be ambassadors of his career and honor his talents as one of the world's greatest entertainers.

Dean was the driving force behind the formation of what eventually became The Dean Martin Association and he maintained direct, close contact with us and co-founder Bernard H Thorpe over the decades, giving us a unique insight into this otherwise elusive figure.

We have worked with EMI/Capitol, Warner-Reprise and other labels from as early as 1964 as consultants or co-producers on a number of officially-licensed compilation albums and re-releases of Dean's studio recordings (one even gaining him a Gold award in 1976).

In 2025, Bernard's son Elliot founded The Dean Martin Association of America.

The DMAA is the DMA's sister organization that oversees US-based charity events and philanthropic projects for the DMA, such as Steubenville's annual Dean Martin Hometown Festival.

Side by side, the DMA and DMAA continuously strive to respect, promote and support the legacy of Dean Martin at all times with the endorsement of members of his family, and the support of businesses, organizations, peers, fans, admirers and members all around the world.

Please visit
deanmartinassociation.com
dmaofamerica.org.

You can contact us by using the
"Get In Touch" tabs on our websites.

Honorary members
Mark Adams, Carole Barker,
Michelle Della Fave, Kent Edens, Mark Halliday,
George Daniel Long, Annie Martin-Crocetti.

PLEASE BUY GENUINE DEAN MARTIN PRODUCTS, WHEREVER THEY ARE SOLD.

MEET THE TEAM



CINDY WILLIFORD

President
Cindy has been a life-long fan of Dean Martin. His songs are always a household staple. Her unalloyed commitment to the DMA has taken us to new heights, ensuring we are still embedded in the hearts and souls of every true Dean Martin fan!



ED KRZAN

Vice President
Ed appreciates all periods of his music and, as a second-generation fan of Dean Martin, he is especially interested in Dean's early Steubenville years. His knowledge, skills, and drive enable him to represent the DMA at corporate levels.



RON IVESON

Consultant
Ron has been a fan of Dean Martin since he was a lad and has been supporting the DMA since the 1980s. As our consultant, he puts his reverential love for and his knowledge of Dean and his career to good use.



MARISA LAVINS

Research/Writer
The Golden Age of Hollywood is Marisa's passion: a long-time aficionado of the era, and of course Dean Martin, she gives the DMA a unique perspective. As well as utilizing her interests, Marisa is the Editor-in-Chief of *Dino Magazine*.



TOM BRADY

Research/Writer
In 2003, Tom heard Dean Martin's voice for the first time - and fell in love instantly forevermore. He brings his acquired knowledge to good use and is particularly interested in "Dino's Lodge", collecting any and all related memorabilia.



ELLIOT THORPE

Executive Chair
Elliot grew up listening, watching and reading about Dean Martin, and is an advocate of his Capitol years. As our Executive Chair, he guides Cindy and the team, and ensures the core DMA values and vision are upheld.



JIMMY BOWEN

Honorary Chair
Veteran and legendary record producer Jimmy is the DMA's first Honorary Chair. Jimmy ushered Dean through a major change in his recording career, giving rise to a whole wealth of top-selling albums for Reprise.



BERNARD H. THORPE

Legacy President
Bernard spent his life promoting and documenting Dean's life and career as co-founder and chief executive of the DMA, winning awards and recognition for his dedication to Dino. He passed away in 2015.



DINO CROCETTI

Legacy Chair
As Dean Martin, Dino spent his entire professional life working across multiple mediums, finding global success and recognition as the "total entertainer". In 1960 he sanctioned the creation of the DMA. He passed away in 1995.



This is the exclusive and fully-authorized magazine published and distributed worldwide since November 1960. The Dean Martin Association is totally lionized to the man himself, his life and career. Wherever you live, whoever you are, I dedicate your association to Dean Martin and to you - as you support us by being a valued member.'

Bernard H Thorpe

Bernard H Thorpe
Legacy President
DMA co-founder and Chief Executive (1960-2015)

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new
feature

Welcome to issue #440, bringing to a close our Martin and Lewis celebrations where we have been taking a look back at the music, film, and television success of this iconic comedic duo.

In this packed edition, we trace Jerry Lewis' incredible rise to fame, the incomparable teamwork that made Dean and Jerry one of entertainment's greatest duos, and the early career of a young Dino as he forged his own path to stardom.

We've also got plenty of laughs with our Martin and Lewis comic strip, featuring some of the duo's silliest antics, along with a very special look at the genius of Dick Stabile and his Orchestra and his working relationship with the boys.

We'll also be revisiting some of our favorite Martin and Lewis films, sharing the moments that keep these classics so enjoyable, and wrap things up by looking at the lasting legacy of Martin and Lewis and the enormous influence they continue to have on comedy, culture, and entertainment today.

You'll note too that our title has been finalised as *Dino Magazine*, after some deliberation, to reflect Iconic's trademark requirements - and our own ongoing commitment to bringing you the best quality and *only* official publication dedicated to Dean anywhere in the world.

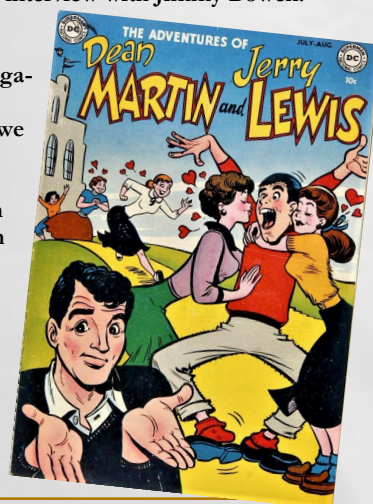
Also keep an ear out for our relaunched podcast. Called *The DMA Show*, it launches exclusively on our YouTube channel on September 3, 2026 with an interview with Jimmy Bowen. Make sure you are subscribed so as not to miss it!

We've also had a number of request for back issues of the magazine: we are working hard on making those available to our mailing list and we'll announce their accessibility as soon as we can.

In the meantime, sit back, enjoy the memories, and join us in celebrating two legends who still know how to make us laugh all these years later!

Marisa

Cover image: based on the cover of Issue #1 of DC Comics' *The Adventures of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis*, published May 21, 1952, originally drawn and inked by Howie Post



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Legacy President **Bernard H Thorpe** Legacy Chair **Dino Crocetti**

Thank you John Anz, Carole Barker, Kent Edens, Jimmy Bowen, Richard S Greene, Annie Martin-Crocetti, Judy Stabile; The Estate of Bernard H Thorpe, Iconic Artists Group

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A MEMORY HIVE PUBLICATION

Before Martin Met Lewis

Part One

WHEN JOE BECAME JERRY

Long before the name Jerry Lewis was joined with Dean Martin on theater marquees across America, there was a restless young boy from New Jersey who had grown up around show business, discovered the intoxicating sound of laughter at an early age, and spent his teenage years trying to find a place for himself on a stage, as **CINDY WILLFORD** explains.

By the summer of 1946, Jerry Lewis was only twenty years old. He was already married, already a father, and already a veteran of the difficult world of small clubs, theaters, burlesque houses and resort entertainment. Yet he was hardly famous. His act was still developing, his bookings were uncertain, and there had been plenty of disappointment along the way.

But Jerry had been preparing for show business almost from birth.

He arrived in the world as Jerome Levitch on March 16, 1926, in Newark, New Jersey. Jerry later maintained that he was born Joseph Levitch, although surviving records, including his birth certificate and census documents, identify him otherwise.

Born into a family in which entertaining was not simply an occupation but a way of life, Jerry's father, Daniel Levitch, performed professionally as Danny Lewis. He was a singer, entertainer and master of ceremonies who worked the clubs and resorts that provided steady employment for performers throughout the Northeast.

Jerry's mother, Rae, was a pianist who served as Danny's musical director and also worked in radio. Their son therefore grew up understanding something most children did not: entertainment was work. There were rehearsals, bookings, travel, audiences and nights away from home. A performer might receive applause one evening and wonder where the next job was coming from the following morning.

Jerry also experienced the less glamorous side of having two working entertainers as parents.

When Danny and Rae traveled, their son frequently remained behind with relatives. At other times he accompanied his parents and observed the world in which they worked.

It created an unusual childhood, one in which the stage could represent both the reason his parents were absent and

the place where Jerry himself discovered that he could command attention.

That discovery came remarkably early.

At approximately five years old, Jerry appeared onstage with his parents and sang "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" with his mother accompanying him on piano.

Jerry later remembered something else about those early appearances that may have mattered even more than singing the song.

During one performance, he accidentally kicked out a foot-light. When the audience realized he had not been hurt, they laughed. The little boy understood immediately what had happened: he had gotten a laugh.

Whether anyone could have known it then or not, the reaction anticipated the performer Jerry would become. An accident could be turned into comedy. Physical movement could produce laughter. And if something worked once, Jerry was willing to push it farther.

The instinct that would someday send him crashing through scenery and disrupting nightclub floors was already beginning to emerge.

Jerry's childhood was not simply a story of growing up happily backstage.

Being separated from his parents while they worked appears to have affected him deeply. Throughout his life, Jerry spoke about his need for approval and his desire to be noticed. The stage provided something immediate that ordinary life did not.

An audience responded. If they laughed, he knew exactly where he stood.

That hunger for a response would become one of the defining characteristics of Jerry Lewis as a performer. He was not naturally inclined to disappear quietly into the background. He wanted to make something happen.

As a boy and teenager, that energy could manifest itself in mischief and pranks.

Traditional schooling proved a poor fit. He attended schools in New Jersey but left formal education while still a teenager.

By then his ambitions were pointed elsewhere anyway. Jerry wanted to perform.

The problem was figuring out exactly what kind of performer he could be. →



WHEN JOE BECAME JERRY

→ Jerry Lewis did not possess the smooth baritone that made his future partner stand out in a nightclub. He was not yet a polished stand-up comedian with carefully constructed jokes.

What Jerry did have was an expressive face, tremendous physical energy, a willingness to make himself ridiculous and an instinct for exaggeration. From those qualities came his first real act.

By approximately fifteen years old, Jerry had developed what became known as his 'Record Act'.

The premise was simple: recordings by established singers would play while Jerry stood before the audience and pantomimed the performances. Rather than merely lip-syncing the songs, he exaggerated them. Facial expressions became larger, gestures became broader and serious musical performances could suddenly become absurd.

Among the performers whose recordings he used were popular entertainers such as Danny Kaye, Kate Smith and Louis Prima. The act was primitive compared with the comedy he would later perform, but it contained important pieces of the future Jerry Lewis.

Music gave him structure, but his body supplied the comedy. He could distort his face, react to a lyric, move unexpectedly or undermine the dignity of the singer whose voice the audience was hearing. He was learning how long to hold an expression and how far he could stretch a physical joke before losing the audience.

Most importantly, he was learning by doing.

There was no comedy school preparing teenage Jerry for a career. His education came from audiences, both welcoming and critical.

One early booking took him to a burlesque house in Buffalo. The engagement did not go well, and work was difficult to find afterward. It was an important introduction to the reality of professional entertainment: wanting to perform did not guarantee that anyone wanted to hire you.

Jerry's early career was a succession of small opportunities rather than one dramatic discovery. As Joe Lewis, he appeared in the Catskills, where generations of entertainers learned how to handle audiences at the hotels and resorts of New York's so-called Borscht Belt. These were invaluable training grounds. An entertainer could not depend upon editing, retakes or television production. The audience was sitting directly in front of him. If something was funny, the room told him immediately. If it wasn't, the silence could be brutal. Jerry learned to adjust.

Working as an MC in burlesque was particularly useful, having to keep a show moving and fill unexpected gaps. That required talking directly to audiences and learning to improvise when something went wrong. For a performer whose first established routine depended upon hiding behind prerecorded music, those experiences helped broaden his abilities. Jerry was slowly learning that the most interesting comedy might occur when the plan fell apart.

Money remained a problem.

His theatrical ambitions did not always provide enough income to live on, so he took ordinary jobs as well. Accounts of his early years include work as a soda jerk and as a theater usher. There must have been considerable irony in that: the teenager who wanted desperately to be the person on stage sometimes earned his living serving the people who had come to watch someone else. He nevertheless continued.

Encouragement from older entertainers helped. Veteran performers recognized something in the young comic and encouraged him not to abandon the business. Gradually he secured more engagements and continued refining his mimic act, changing his stage name to Jerry Lewis.

The change helped avoid confusion with prominent names already familiar to American audiences, particularly comedian Joe E. Lewis and heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis. More importantly, it gave the aspiring entertainer the identity under which he would eventually become famous.

Before the world knew Jerry Lewis, however, he still had to convince nightclub owners to put that name on a bill. from. YouTube hadn't been launched yet, and the idea of hav-

Jerry's personal life was moving quickly too. He met Patti Palmer, a singer who had performed with bandleader Ted Fio Rito's orchestra. They married in 1944, when Jerry was only eighteen. Their marriage added adult responsibilities to a career that remained anything but secure.

By the summer of 1946, Jerry was not simply a twenty-year-old comedian trying to establish himself. He was also a husband and the father of a young son. World War II surrounded the lives of young men of Jerry's generation, but Jerry did not enter military service. Contemporary accounts have attributed his rejection for service to physical issues including a perforated eardrum and a heart murmur. Instead, he continued trying to build a career in entertainment. Those wartime and immediate postwar years were crucial. The teenage performer who had begun with a phonograph and a pantomime routine was becoming increasingly comfortable in front of live audiences. He was learning to ad-lib. He was learning how to survive a bad room. He was discovering that comedy could come from disrupting what an audience expected to happen. And he was becoming ambitious. Jerry did not simply want another booking. He wanted something larger. He just had not yet found the vehicle that would take him there.

By 1946, Jerry was working within a nightclub world filled with singers, comics, dancers and specialty performers, all moving between engagements and hoping for a break. It was a remarkably competitive environment. A singer might work one club for a week and move elsewhere. Comics filled spots between musical acts. Performers watched one another, borrowed ideas, recommended friends for bookings and sometimes found themselves sharing bills repeatedly. Jerry's mimic act gave him something to sell, but it had limitations. Pantomiming recordings could get him onto a stage; it was unlikely by itself to make him a major star. His real talent was increasingly evident outside the formal boundaries of the routine. Jerry was funny when he reacted. He was funny when he interrupted. He was funny when circumstances became chaotic.

That distinction would become enormously important. During this period, Jerry encountered Dean Martin, then in his late 20s, trying to move upward through the same nightclub world.

Jerry was almost his physical and temperamental opposite.

In the spring of 1946, both appeared around New York's nightclub circuit, including the Havana-Madrid. After the regular entertainment had finished, Dean and Jerry experimented informally with appearing together. Something happened when the two personalities occupied the same stage. Jerry could disrupt Dean. Dean didn't have to fight the disruption. The singer could simply remain Dean. The contrast itself was funny. There was enough promise in those informal appearances that Billboard noticed the potential, but both men continued working separately. For Jerry, that meant continuing miming and pursuing the next booking.

By July 1946, Jerry Lewis had arrived at Atlantic City's 500 Club. He was twenty. Behind him were fifteen years separating the little boy who first walked onto a stage from the young comedian now trying to earn his living there. He had experienced applause and failure. He had left school. He had worked ordinary jobs when show business did not pay enough. He had traveled through theaters, burlesque houses, resorts and nightclubs. He had created his own unique act and learned that physical comedy could communicate in ways words sometimes could not. He had married and become a father.

Then, when a singer at the 500 Club was no longer available, Jerry suggested Dean as a replacement.

On July 25, 1946, the two men appeared together at the club in the engagement that is generally recognized as the beginning of Martin and Lewis.

Within a remarkably short period, the struggling singer and young comic would become one of the hottest nightclub acts in America. Radio, television, recordings and motion pictures would follow. Their partnership would eventually transform both of their lives. **DM**



THE LOUNGE

with ED KRZAN

Duo – a pair, or a couple of people or two things; **team** – a group of people joined together to perform a certain task; **sensation** – a widespread reaction of interest and excitement; **lightning in a bottle** – to succeed in a way that is either lucky or unlikely.

Ebony and ivory, salt and pepper, oil and vinegar, these are duos who in nature's spectrum would never cross paths. However given the correct circumstances and timing, these unlikely pairs come together to create new entities and experiences. On their own they merit their own spotlights, however paired together they hit new heights, the sum is greater than their parts.

Some duos have been lost to the sands of time, such as Wheeler & Woolsey, and Clark & McCullough, while others forever jettisoned to the annals of history to never be forgotten, such as Abbot & Costello, and Laurel & Hardy.

On other fronts we have the Wright Brothers and Lewis & Clark, historical pairs of a different nature.

Teams, duos, pairs, partners, and other groups share a special bond in the entertainment realm; they are compared to the rest of the business in a unique light.

The special bonds and relationships that make the successful teams are attractive to an audience because they convey a familiarity we all crave or yearn for in our own lives.

A familiar face, a friend we relate to, shared experiences and predictable personalities.

The best teams give us all the above.

The team styles all had their own unique twist on the partnership flavors. The Three Stooges gave us the basic slapstick comedy; Crosby & Hope gave us a more sophisticated comedy duo; The Marx Brothers were classic Vaudeville routines with a tremendous amount of wit and timing.

All which brings us to one of the last most successful teams...arguably on of the *most successful* teams in Hollywood history: Martin and Lewis.

Dean and Jerry...sex and slapstick...the organ grinder and the monkey...suave and slob.

The Golden Age of Hollywood produced many teams and duos in the early 20th century, however Martin and Lewis is remembered for being the most successful.

The unlikely pairing of crooner and clown came about just as any other unplanned accidental pairing: chocolate and peanut butter, wine and cheese, salt and sour, Martin and Lewis.

The sultry Dean and the slovenly Jerry gave the thunder and lightning one-two-punch never seen before or since. The fresh coolness of Martin and the zany comedic genius of Lewis produced two sides of entertainment value.

All demographic boxes were checked, the children, the men, the women, the young and the old, all were taken away by the handsome Martin and the zany Lewis.

They were more than the classic team Americana had been witnessing up to this point.

Martin and Lewis did what all new breakthrough products do.

They pushed the envelope, they created new unique experiences never seen, they created a buzz that nobody previously did.



The new comedy team vibe they created was fresh and energetic.

A Hollywood handsome straight man with a comic wit and timing that was so subtle and transparent it seemed as if they have been a team and shared a womb.

The crazy lightning-bolt Lewis was off-the-charts energetic : his over the top performance constantly put his body in harm's way.

For ten straight years the paired comic duo performed on stage and radio, and both the large and small screen. Their live performances always towered over the television and movies, never able to capture the spontaneity the free stage always offered.

Two performers so deft at impromptu no two performances were ever the same.

Crowd participation and breaking the fourth wall were the golden ingredients in keeping the team above the status quo in the entertainment industry.

Not afraid to insult an unsuspecting crowd member or call out celebrities or mobsters in the audience kept the pair at the razors edge of the newest style of entertainment.

Nobody was safe from the mayhem which delighted this new wave of the new medium call television. Cue cards strewn about, cameras hijacked, sets destroyed, this new level of talent and comedy would forever be remembered for its raw energy and stop at nothing antics to garner laughs.

Jerry Lewis, the raw comedy ingredient of the team runs at 10,000 RPMs, and at 100% energy output.

His clay-like facial expressions and screechy voice are a visual and audible one-two punch that excites the nerve endings like nothing else before or since. His childlike persona is cleverly juxtapositioned with his alter highbrow personality, always keeps the viewers off guard, which results in the greatest comedic sleight of hand ever witnessed. In tandem with the comedic rebound from Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis can witfully volley like no other comedian. This combination of unique talent enables new heights, new records, and new standards for a time to come.

Dean Martin, the calm, cool partner, the cool and collected alter ego of the pair, keeps the team grounded to earth. Martin can sing, dance, and land a superior comedic jab of his own when needed.

Dean Martin is the best straight man to ever live, because he's funnier than the funny guy. Nobody else can keep the other half of team with Jerry Lewis on the rails.

When the pair were not on a red-hot comedic bender Martin would cool the set with his smooth crooning style which ruled the days entertainment airways.

The alternating fire and ice storm always kept the show fresh and surprising.

This unique partnership went on to dominate the country for ten brilliant years.

Breaking records wherever they entertained, there mark would last forever.

But like all teams, tandems, and duos, their time together would come to an end.

The natural evolution of each talent would outgrow the team, and each one went their own solo way.

Both achieved staggering success and were beloved for both their unique personalities.

Which is to say, that is a natural ending to most comedy teams.

The fuel gets exhausted, the times change, and the players evolve. Nothing lasts forever, neither the laughs, nor the tears.

Aim high, stop at the highest, leave the audience wanting more.

And then *legendary status* is yours to wield. **DM**

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Before Martin Met Lewis

Rant Two

WHEN DINO BECAME DEAN



When Dean Martin stepped onto the stage of Atlantic City's 500 Club with Jerry Lewis in the summer of 1946, he did not arrive as an unknown young man waiting for someone to give him his first chance in show business. He was twenty-nine years old, a husband and father, and a professional singer who had already spent years working with bands, appearing in nightclubs, trying his luck in New York, and singing on radio. Success had hardly come easily, and national fame remained beyond his reach, but Dean Martin already had a career, as **CINDY WILLFORD** recounts.

The Ohio River town in which Dino Crocetti grew up was far removed from the Hollywood soundstages, Las Vegas showrooms and elegant nightclubs that would eventually become so closely associated with his Dean Martin stage persona.

Steubenville was a hardworking industrial town, dominated by steel mills and populated by families whose roots reached into many parts of Europe. Neighborhood businesses, restaurants, poolrooms, clubs and barbershops were part of everyday life, and Dino grew up observing the assortment of personalities who passed through them.

At home, the Crocettis spoke Italian, and Dino reportedly spoke little English when he first entered school. It was one of the earliest occasions in which he had to learn to adapt to a world beyond his own home and neighborhood. Formal education never held much attraction for him, however, and he left high school in the tenth grade.

'I was a pretty cocky and mischievous kid,' he told biographer Bernard H Thorpe. 'I felt I had to be.'

Like many young men growing up in Steubenville during those years, he went to work.

Accounts of Dino's youth have accumulated their share of varied stories over the decades. He worked at a variety of jobs, including a period connected with the steel mills, and he was familiar with the gambling rooms and clubs that flourished around town. Some stories have inevitably grown in the telling, particularly after the quiet barber's son became one of the most famous entertainers in the world, but there is little doubt that the young Dino encountered an education outside the classroom that would serve him well. He learned to watch people,

from very different walks of life.

Long before Dean Martin learned how to read an audience, Dino Crocetti was learning how to read a room.

One of the most colorful episodes of his youth was his brief venture into boxing. Fighting under the name Kid Crochet, Dino entered the ring as a teenager. Years later, Dean characteristically turned the experience into comedy, joking about a record in which he had won all but eleven of twelve fights. The line was pure Dean: dry, self-deprecating and delivered as though none of it mattered very much. Whatever his actual record, boxing was never going to provide Dino with a lasting future. The damaged hands, bruises and hard realities of the ring offered little of the glamour that later retellings sometimes gave the story.

There was another talent, however, that was beginning to offer him a different possibility: young Dino loved to sing.

Popular music was everywhere during his formative years and, like countless aspiring male vocalists of his generation, he listened closely to Bing Crosby. Bing had helped transform popular singing through his use of the microphone, creating an intimate, conversational style that did not require a singer to overpower a room. He could seemingly speak a lyric as much as sing it, allowing personality and phrasing to carry a song. Dino absorbed those lessons, although the relaxed style that audiences would someday recognize immediately as Dean Martin's would be his ultimate tribute to Bing, and would take years to develop.

He began singing locally as Dino Martini, performing in clubs and with bands while still taking other work to support himself.

By 1939, singing was becoming more than an occasional pursuit. Dino received an engagement with Ernie McKay's band, giving him valuable experience as a working vocalist. A bandstand could be an unforgiving training ground. A young singer had to learn how to enter a song, how to work with musicians, how to judge the mood of a room and how to hold the attention of people who had not necessarily come to hear him. There were no second takes. If a number failed to connect, the singer learned from it and came back for the next one.

Those nights helped shape the performer Dino was →



WHEN DINO BECAME DEAN

→ becoming. The ease that would eventually appear so instinctive in Dean was not simply something that appeared when the lights came on years later. Behind it were countless evenings spent singing for audiences large and small, interested and indifferent, learning which instincts could be trusted.

An even more important stage in his development came when he began singing with Cleveland bandleader Sammy Watkins. Watkins provided Dino with a professional setting in which he could continue developing as a vocalist and also imposed the name change to Dean Martin, to differentiate Dino from countless other Italian crooners around at that time.

A new name, of course, did not suddenly bring fame.

Dean remained a working singer, and the years with Watkins became an important apprenticeship. Regular appearances gave him the opportunity to refine his phrasing and stage manner and, perhaps most importantly, to discover what suited him. He was not a singer who needed vocal fireworks to command attention. His strength was increasingly found in warmth, understatement and the impression that singing required no more effort than carrying on a conversation.

His personal life was changing as well. In October 1941, Dean married Betty McDonald. Their first child, Craig, was born in 1942, followed by Claudia in 1944 and Gail in 1945. Deana would arrive in 1948. During the years in which Dean was trying to establish himself professionally, he was also a young husband and father with very real responsibilities.

That part of the story is important. Looking backward from fame can make the early nightclub years sound romantic: a young singer traveling from engagement to engagement while waiting for his big break. The reality was far less certain.

Jobs ended and new ones had to be found. Financial debts continued to mount. Travel meant time away from home. A successful engagement did not guarantee another, and talent alone offered no assurance that a performer would ever become a star.

Still, Dean continued.

By 1943, he was ready to move beyond the relative security of singing with a band and pursue a solo career. The timing was significant. The enormous popularity of singers such as Frank Sinatra was changing the entertainment business. Vocalists who had once been presented as featured members of big bands were becoming attractions in their own right, and Dean wanted the opportunity to stand on his own.

New York was the obvious destination, but it was also filled with talented performers pursuing the same dream. Dean began working there and secured an engagement at the Riobamba, the fashionable nightclub where Sinatra had previously appeared. The booking represented real progress. The young man who had started singing around Ohio was now appearing in one of the most important entertainment centers in the country.

He was moving forward, even if the movement sometimes seemed painfully slow.

Another opportunity arrived in 1944 when Dean was given a fifteen-minute radio program, *Songs by Dean Martin*, broadcast from New York. It was a modest chapter in a career that would later include enormously successful radio and television programs, but in the context of the young Dean's story it was significant. His voice was now traveling beyond the nightclub walls and into the homes of listeners.

Yet, what may be the most revealing aspect of Dean's career before Martin & Lewis, the breakthrough continued to elude him.

By the middle of the 1940s, he possessed many of the qualities that would eventually make him a star. He was handsome, personable and experienced. His voice was smooth and distinctive, and his manner in front of an audience was becoming increasingly relaxed. What he lacked was the opportunity that would make the public remember his name.

So he continued working the nightclub circuit.

There is a certain irony in these years when viewed through the image Dean later cultivated. At the height of his fame, he

became the entertainer who appeared never to be trying very hard. Rehearsal itself became part of the joke. Dean seemed to stroll onto a stage, sing beautifully, get the laugh and go home...or preferably head for the golf course.

That carefully cultivated impression of effortlessness became so convincing that it sometimes obscured the years of work that preceded it.

Nothing about Dean's early career was effortless.

By this point, his journey had begun to take shape: leaving Steubenville, moving through a series of dance hall bands, gradually carving out a place for himself in the music world. The details shifted along the way, but the pattern was unmistakable: he kept going, even when success was far from guaranteed.

In July 1946, Dean made some of his earliest commercial recordings for Diamond Records. They did not make him a recording star, but they added another piece to a career that had been slowly building for years.

By then, the résumé was more substantial than is sometimes remembered. Dean had performed with regional bands, served as a featured vocalist with Sammy Watkins, established himself professionally under the name Dean Martin, worked New York nightclubs, appeared on radio and entered a recording studio. He was no longer a hopeful amateur trying to find a way into show business. He was a professional entertainer trying to find the opportunity that would take him to the next level.

Dean was twenty-nine years old in the summer of '46.

By this point he understood musicians, nightclubs and audiences. He knew what it felt like when a room was with him and what it felt like when it was not. He had developed the beginnings of the singing style that would remain at the heart of his career for decades. Whatever was about to happen, Dean Martin already knew who he was as a singer.

Dean and Jerry had crossed paths before they became partners, both working in the same general world of East Coast nightclubs. Their first appearances together were hardly an instant polished success, but once the two men abandoned the conventional approach and began interrupting, ad-libbing and playing off one another, something extraordinary happened. Audiences responded to the handsome, seemingly unflappable singer and the unpredictable young comic determined to destroy every dignified moment Dean attempted to create.

Within a remarkably short time, Martin & Lewis would become a sensation.

The partnership changed Dean Martin's life and provided the breakthrough he had spent years seeking, just as it transformed Jerry Lewis's career. Together they created something neither man could have created alone. But the Dean Martin who became one half of that team brought something substantial with him: years of professional experience, a developed musical identity, an easy stage presence and the ability to remain perfectly composed while chaos erupted around him.

The extraordinary success that followed can make those years appear to be merely a prologue, but they were much more than that. They were the years in which there was a ove from Dino to Dean...not the international star he would eventually be, but the working entertainer capable of becoming one when the opportunity finally arrived.

Soon there would be packed nightclubs and screaming crowds. Martin & Lewis would conquer radio, television and motion pictures. Paramount would turn the team into box-office stars, and within only a few years Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis would become two of the most recognizable entertainers in America.

None of that was certain in the summer of 1946.

For one last moment, Dean Martin stood on the edge of it all: a twenty-nine-year-old singer from Steubenville who had spent years traveling, singing and waiting for the public to notice what he could do.

Dino Crocetti had already become Dean Martin.

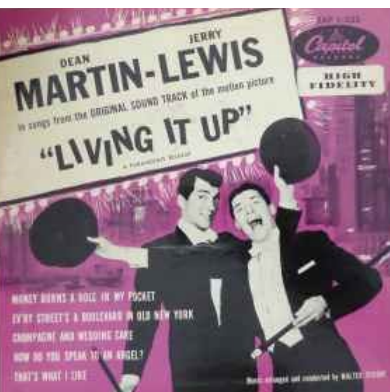
The world simply hadn't discovered him yet. **DM**

LIVING IT UP

EAP1-533 / 45" EP / Capitol; released June 7, 1952

Long before film soundtracks and scores were popular, or even considered viable marketable prospects, artists who also sang in films were nevertheless a good marketing outlet for record labels.

During the Martin and Lewis years, Dean was signed to Capitol and they took advantage of his film career, releasing a number of EPs to tie in with his big screen appearances.



Living It Up is one of the finest examples of Dean and Jerry's film canon and Capitol pressed this 45" to promote the Paramount picture and showcase one of their more popular signings.

Five tracks make up the EP, four of which are sublime and near-perfect:

"Money Burns A Hole In My Pocket", a Styne/Hilliard composition, was recorded by Dean on December 23, 1953, with

the fourth take committed, at Capitol with Dick Stabile and his Orchestra. It first appeared as the b-side to "Sway" (F2818), released May 24, 1954 before being pulled onto *LIVING IT UP* the next month.

There is a charm to it that shines. Easily hummable and (providing one's vocals talents are adequately respectable) delightfully singable. It's one I often find myself humming subconsciously (I don't dare sing to spare the local cat population the agony), wishing that I *did* have money to burn my pockets!

Jerry Lewis as a singer was...challenging (but he probably did sing better than me!).

Once declaring himself that he was a vocalist superior to Dean, personally I can't hear it, and I would imagine most other Dean Martin admirers can't either. I like to think he said that with tongue firmly in his cheek, as was his wont in interviews!

All the same, he was also signed to Capitol, and while he didn't have a flourishing and successful solo recording career, he did step up to the mic on occasion. One such time was for "Champagne And Wedding Cake", the studio version of the song featured in the movie. Most of Jerry's singing performances in a Martin and Lewis picture were as a partial duet with Dean, so it was unusual that for *Living It Up* he held an entire scene on his own for "Champagne And Wedding Cake", segueing into his rendition of "How Do You Speak To An Angel?". We are mercifully spared that latter song on this EP, instead given Dean's beautiful interpretation instead.

Walter Scharf and his Orchestra accompany Dean here, this third take of the Styne/Hilliard composition. It was recorded on April 20, 1954.

It is a plaintive song, and Dean's vocals really capture the anguish of being in love and struggling to express that love.

We are advocates here at the DMA of the man's ability to smooth his way through any given lyric, but listen to "How Do You Speak To An Angel?" and one can hear the emotion Dean is conveying. For me, it's one of his most emotively-driven performances in a song.

It first appeared as a single (CL14150/45CL14150) coupled with "Ev'ry Street's A Boulevard (In Old New York)" in the UK, reaching number 15 in the British charts on October 22, 1954 for two weeks. It was also the very first single the young Bernard Thorpe purchased, aged 16! It was this song that captured his admiration for Dean that lasted a lifetime.

Interestingly, the same single re-entered the British charts on

November 19, 1964, staying at number 17 for four weeks.

Witty lyrics and a delightful melody by Styne/Hilliard with the orchestra of Walter Scharf demonstrating a perfect string section, "Ev'ry Street's A Boulevard (In Old New York)" is up-beat and catchy.

However, in spite of all that, for me it is let down by the vocal mixing. Dean's voice is just buried under the higher register of Jerry's singing and so the whole affair suffers as a result.

Designed and written specifically as a duet, there would be no satisfactory way for Dean to have sung it solo, but nevertheless some equalizing here would have adjusted the two artists' conflicting styles.

One also wonders why the full version of the song wasn't captured in the studio. The delightful opening refrain we get in the film version would have at least given some credence to Dean's input.

So what we are left with is a disappointing fourth take of a rather lovely song (recorded April 20, 1954) that Dean just happens to appear on.

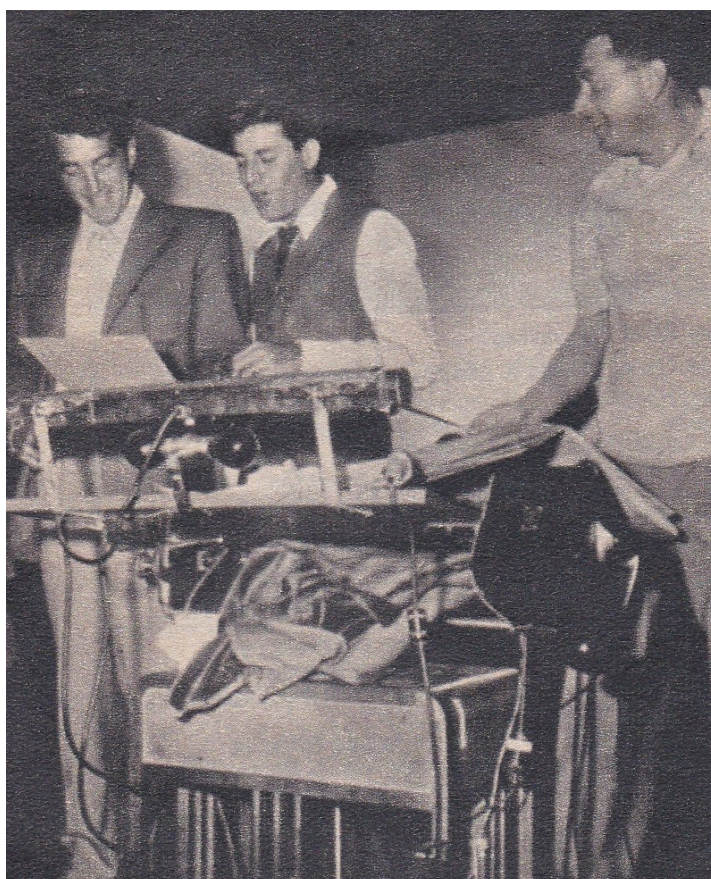
Almost at the top of the film, Dean performs the stunning solo song "That's What I Like" (Styne/Hilliard), serenading a photo of Audrey Hepburn while Jerry looks gormlessly on.

The studio recording is far superior and that it was done and dusted on the first take (on December 23, 1953) demonstrates Dean's ability to capture the essence while Dick Stabile's orchestra nails the gorgeous guitar solo.

It's a song that doesn't get much exposure, which is a great shame because it really is superb and worthy to have appeared on one of his major Capitol compilations. In my opinion, for what it's worth, the Capitol Collector's Series album should have included it, bringing it out into the light.

That we can hear it and stream it any time we like now though is marvellous - so after reading this, why not go online and share it with your followers?

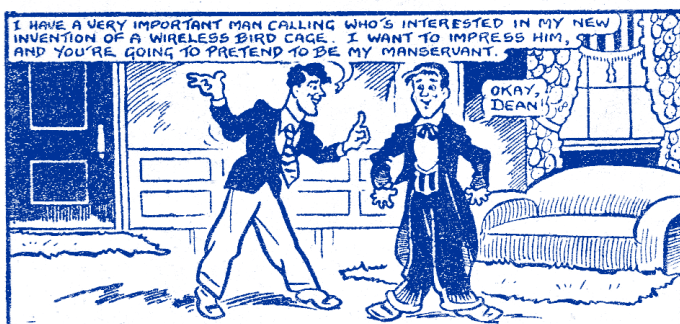
And incidentally, our very own Tom Brady plays a mean version of its guitar solo... **DM**



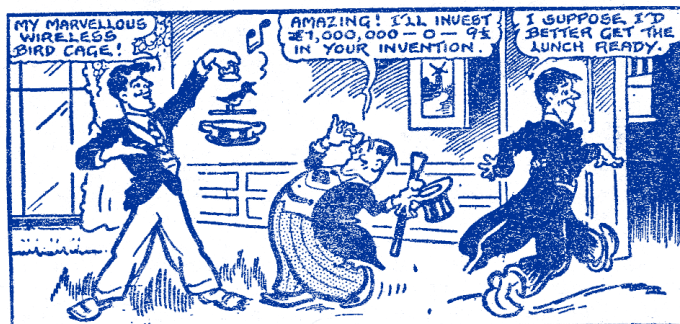
Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis in SERVICE WITH A SMILE

From Film Fun Annual 1956, Amalgamated Press

MARTIN & LEWIS 80 YEARS OF LAUGHTER 1946 - 2026



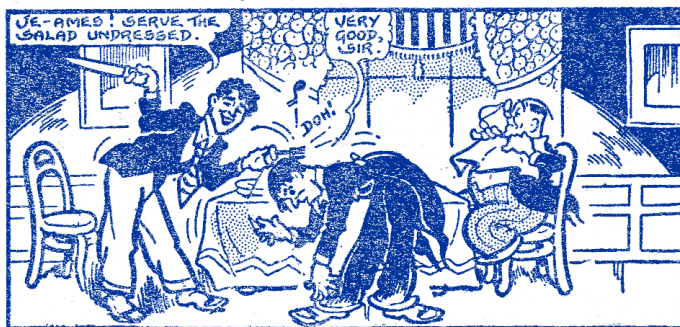
1. Max Mintomoney makes a mint o' money every week—and Dean Martin is hoping to get some of it passed on to him when he exhibits his invention. But in order to impress the great man he asks old Jerry to act as his manservant.



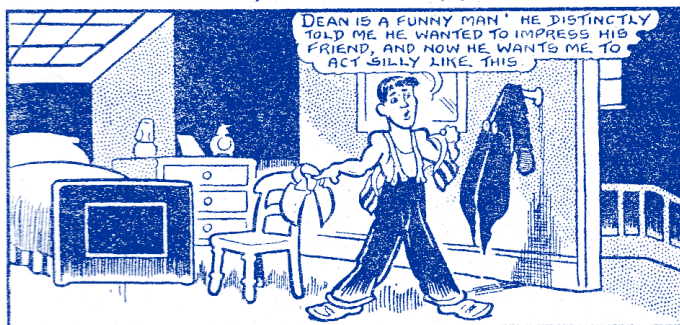
2. "Anything to oblige," agrees Jerry—and hires a waiter's costume specially for the occasion. Dean has invented a wireless bird cage—that is, a bird cage without any wires, and Mr. Mintomoney immediately decides it's just the job.



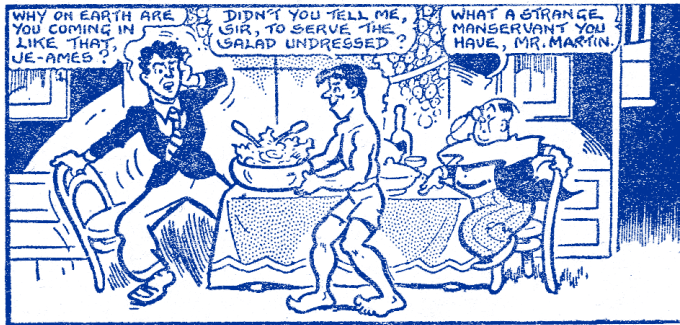
3. He is ready to prepare a contract straight away, but Dean suggests that it can wait until after lunch. Jerry lays the table—and it then occurs to Dean that the wealthy one might like a salad. "I don't want my salad dressed," pipes Mr. Mintomoney.



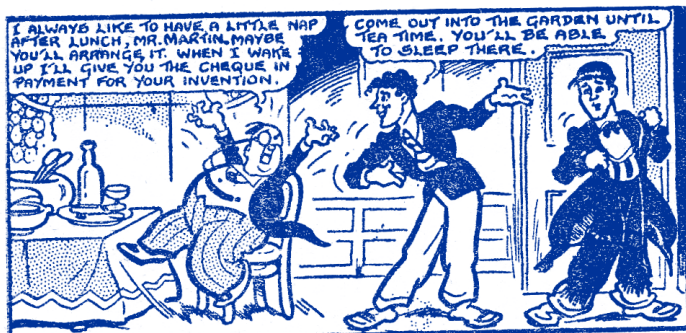
4. "As you wish," coos Dean. "Hi, Jerry! Ahem, I mean Je-ames! Would you be so kind as to serve the salad undressed?" Jerry looks a bit surprised, but he's ready to play his part—and, bowing to Dean, he says he'll do so.



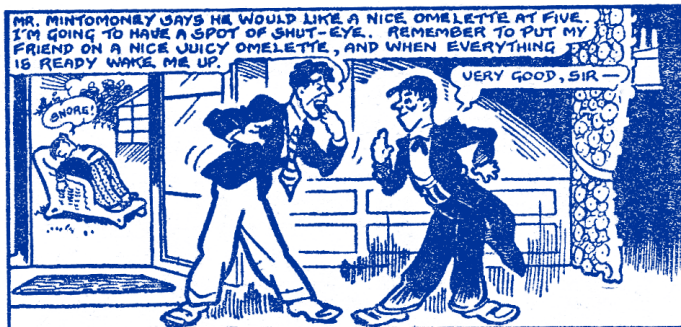
5. Jerry hurries up to his bedroom in a very puzzled state of mind. "Serve the salad undressed?" he murmurs, as he begins to peel off his clothes. "What a strange idea! Still, orders are orders, and perhaps Mr. Mintomoney will be very impressed with my rippling muscles. I hope so."



6. But both Dean and his guest are very surprised when Jerry walks in with the salad, looking as if he has taken the wrong turning to the swimming baths. "You told me to serve the salad undressed," he says to Dean, "so here I am! Do hurry up and take it! I'm beginning to feel cold!"



7. Once again Jerry dons his manservant's outfit and Mr. Mintomoney tucks into the lunch. "Splendid!" he cries, as he chews up the last chunk of cheese. "I feel a better man! And I shall feel better still when I have had a little nap. Then we can sign our contract and I'll hand you over my cheque." Dean invites him into the garden. He'll sleep better outside.



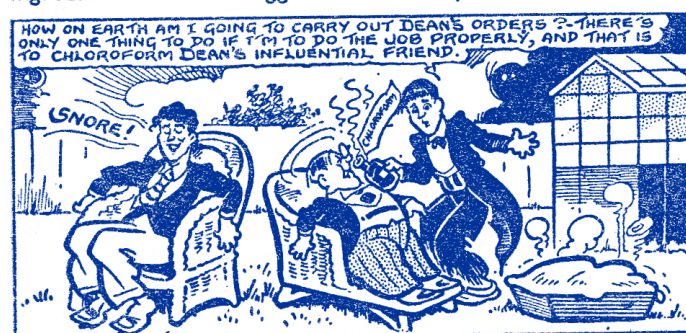
8. After that heavy lunch, Dean doesn't think the hammock will take Mr. Mintomoney's weight and so he brings out a nice easy chair. Meanwhile, Dean is giving Jerry further instructions. "Mr. M. is ever so fond of omelettes," he tells Jerry, "and so I want you to put him on a nice juicy omelette and wake me up when everything is quite ready." Jerry agrees.



9. "Looks as if I'm going to have a busy time," murmurs Jerry, but he's not the sort of lad who minds hard work—and he soon gets cracking in the kitchen. Yes, he cracks a dozen eggs first, for it's an outsize in omelettes that he's got to prepare—and he works these in with the other ingredients into the biggest kitchen tray he can find, folks.



10. Time marches on—over two hours of it and Jerry sees then that there are only five minutes to go before carrying out Dean's orders. "Don't reckon it's going to be too easy," he says to himself, but he shifts the hot, tasty-looking omelette on to a tea-wagon and wheels it out into the garden, where old Dean and Mr. Max Mintomoney are doing their dozing.



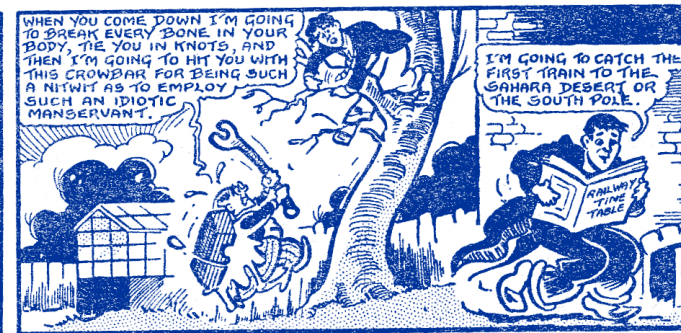
11. "Dean told me to put Mr. Mintomoney on an omelette," says Jerry. "Well, I've got the omelette and here's Mr. Mintomoney. Now I suppose I'd better try and get him on to it." Thinking that Mr. M. might be annoyed if he is awakened before being put on the omelette, Jerry decides that a little chloroform will be useful and he gives Dean's visitor a few whiffs.



12. It is then the simplest thing to lift Mr. Mintomoney out of his chair and put him on the outsize omelette. "That's that part of the job done," grins Jerry. "I'm getting on like a house on fire! Phew, it's warm work!" It looks as if Mr. Mintomoney is going to feel warm very soon, but now the clock is striking five—and it's time for Jerry to wake up Dean.

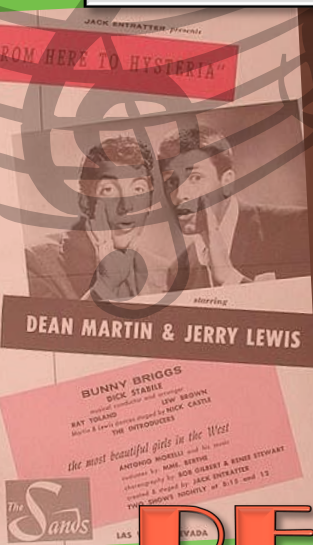


13. "How—why—when—where—what——" splutters Dean, when he sees his important guest lying on the omelette. "Explain yourself, Jerry Lewis!" Poor Jerry looks quite hurt. "It's no use getting angry, Dean!" he cries. "I only carried out your orders! You said he would like a nice omelette at five o'clock—and then you told me to put him on the omelette!"



14. "I didn't mean put him on the omelette!" howls Dean. "I meant put an omelette on for him on the oven! I somehow don't think he will give me that cheque now!" How right Dean is! All Mr. Mintomoney wants to give Dean when he sees the state of affairs is a good hard whack with a crowbar. And as Dean moves to get away from him, Jerry makes a move, too!

DICK STABILE



BEHIND THE BATON

When the story of Martin and Lewis is told, certain names naturally dominate. There is Dean, the handsome singer with the seemingly effortless voice, and Jerry, the unpredictable comic whose energy could turn an orderly nightclub floor into controlled chaos. There were writers, producers, directors, musicians and managers who helped transform two relatively unknown entertainers into the most popular comedy team in America. And then, usually standing just behind them with an orchestra at his command, was Dick Stabile. Guest contributor JUDY STABILE takes us back to those halcyon days.

Dick Stabile was so frequently present during the Martin and Lewis years that audiences could easily have taken him for granted. Martin and Lewis did not. For much of their partnership, Richard "Dick" Stabile served as their musical director, conductor, arranger, saxophonist and bandleader. He supplied the musical framework for Dean's songs and the musical punctuation for Jerry's comedy.

Because this was Martin and Lewis, however, Stabile eventually became something else as well.

He became part of the fun.

Dean and Jerry acknowledged him, teased him and drew him into their unpredictable world until the man holding the baton became a familiar supporting character in the Martin and Lewis story.

Long before the duo entered his life, Dick had already built a considerable musical career.

Born in Newark, New Jersey, on May 29, 1909, Stabile came from a musical family and began playing saxophone while still young. By the age of nineteen, he had joined the orchestra of popular bandleader Ben Bernie. Those early professional years gave Stabile an education that went far beyond reading an arrangement from a page. He learned how music functioned before a live audience and how an orchestra supported an entertainer rather than competed with one. He also learned the timing and flexibility required of musicians working in radio and live entertainment...skills that would prove particularly valuable when Martin and Lewis came along.

By the mid-1930s, Stabile was leading his own orchestra.

His bands recorded for labels including Decca, Bluebird and Vocalion, and he worked throughout the big-band era, when

bandleaders themselves could become recognizable entertainment personalities.

World War II interrupted his civilian career when Stabile entered the United States Coast Guard and served in its music department.

After returning to civilian life in 1945, he reorganized his band in California and worked prominent Hollywood nightspots, including Slapsie Maxie's and Ciro's, names familiar to those conscious of the Martin and Lewis history.

California placed him squarely in the entertainment world that Dean and Jerry were rapidly conquering, but exactly when Stabile first became connected with Martin and Lewis presents an interesting historical question.

Biographical material associated with the Richard "Dick" Stabile collection at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas states that he met Dean and Jerry while performing at Ciro's in 1949 and that they soon hired him as their musical director. A contemporary account published in *TV-Radio Life* in February 1952 offers a somewhat different chronology, stating that Stabile had been playing in Hollywood in 1947 when he was teamed with Martin and Lewis.

The discrepancy between 1947 and 1949 remains worthy of further research, but there is no question that by the beginning of the 1950s Dick Stabile had become an important member of the Martin and Lewis phenomenon.

It was an organization unlike almost anything else in American entertainment: Martin and Lewis gave audiences the appearance of complete disorder. Jerry interrupted Dean, Dean broke character, Jerry attacked the scenery, musicians and practically anything else within reach, and Dean might attempt to sing while his partner did everything possible to prevent him from doing so.

Yet beneath the apparent chaos was an extraordinary sense of timing and for a musical director, Martin and Lewis presented an unusual challenge: Stabile could not simply count off a number, conduct it precisely and assume everything would proceed exactly as rehearsed.

Their comedy thrived on spontaneity. A routine could stretch because an audience reacted particularly strongly to a joke. Jerry might suddenly involve a musician. Dean could react to something unexpected and take a moment in an entirely different direction. A song might begin conventionally and suddenly become part of the comedy.

Through all of it, the orchestra had to remain ready to play, stop, resume or follow Dean wherever he went.

Stabile had to be watching *everything*.

His years in big bands, nightclubs and radio made him remarkably well suited to the assignment. Stabile understood musicians, but just as importantly, he understood entertainers.

That distinction mattered enormously with Martin and Lewis. The orchestra was not operating independently from what happened onstage. It was part of the machinery of the act, and Stabile stood at the point where the carefully arranged musical world met the glorious unpredictability of Dean and Jerry.

A 1952 *TV-Radio Life* feature captured Stabile's unusual position particularly well. Appropriately titled "Music Man for Martin and Lewis," the article presented him not merely as their musical director but as someone who had become a familiar foil for the team's jokes. In other words, Dick Stabile was not safely hidden behind an anonymous orchestra.

Dean and Jerry knew he was there, and they made certain the audience knew it as well.

That relationship reveals something important about Martin and Lewis: the world surrounding them could become part of the comedy. Musicians, orchestra leaders, announcers, guest stars and occasionally even unsuspecting audience members could suddenly find themselves pulled into Dean and Jerry's universe.

Stabile became especially useful because he represented exactly the sort of professional order that Martin and Lewis delighted in disrupting. There he stood, properly dressed and responsible for an orchestra, while Jerry Lewis seemed determined to make orderly entertainment impossible.

Stabile therefore provided another kind of straight man. Dean famously served as the calm counterweight to Jerry's frenzy, but Dean was also an active participant in the comedy. Stabile could represent the supposedly serious professional trying to maintain musical order while Dean and Jerry dismantled it around him. The jokes worked because there was affection beneath them. Audiences understood that Stabile belonged there.

Repeated appearances created familiarity, and the orchestra leader standing behind the stars gradually became a recognizable personality himself.

His involvement even extended into the team's motion pictures.

Stabile appeared in *At War With The Army* (Paramount, 1950), playing Private Pokey. It was a small role, but its significance lies in what it demonstrates about his place within their professional circle. He was no longer merely the man hired to conduct music.

Stabile had become part of the larger Martin and Lewis company, familiar enough to be included in their screen world as well as their musical one.

Television strengthened that association considerably.

When Martin and Lewis became regular hosts of NBC's *The Colgate Comedy Hour*, television was still young enough that many of its conventions were being created as performers experimented with the possibilities of the medium. The program combined comedy, music, guest stars, sketches and the excitement of live performance.

Martin and Lewis were ideally suited to television because the camera allowed millions of viewers to experience something nightclub audiences had already discovered: much of the team's magic existed in what happened between the planned moments.

Dick Stabile and his orchestra were right in the middle of it. Surviving program credits identify Stabile as orchestra leader or

orchestrator, and the orchestra itself was sometimes identified as the Dick Stabile Orchestra.

His position required a delicate balancing act. Behind him sat professional musicians expected to execute arrangements correctly.

In front of him stood Dean and Jerry. One was a singer who needed sensitive accompaniment; the other

was a comedian perfectly capable of turning that accompaniment, the musicians or Stabile himself into the next joke.

Stabile had to serve both.

For Dean, however, Stabile's presence carried a deeper musical importance. Looking backward from the Dean Martin who would eventually record "Everybody Loves Somebody," host *The Dean Martin Show* and become one of the most recognizable singers in the world, it is easy to overlook just how important the Martin and Lewis years were to

Dean's development as a

vocalist. Dean was not entirely waiting for the partnership to end so that his "real" singing career could begin, he was singing constantly throughout those ten years and steadily defining the style that would eventually become unmistakably his own.

Dean sang in nightclubs, on radio, on television, in motion pictures and in Capitol recording studios. Week after week he performed before enormous audiences who may initially have come to see Martin and Lewis but also heard Dean Martin sing.

Those performances required arrangers, conductors and musicians capable of understanding what made Dean different. His greatest strength was increasingly his naturalness. Dean did not appear to attack a song or labor over its meaning. He relaxed into it, allowing phrasing, warmth and personality to carry the lyric.

An arrangement could either encourage that quality or work against it. Dean needed accompaniment that supported him without overwhelming him.

Stabile had the advantage of knowing the singer extraordinarily well. He was not a conductor meeting Dean for the first time when the recording light came on. He had heard him night after night. He knew his phrasing, timing and manner of approaching a lyric. He understood the difference between the singer Dean Martin and the straight-man Dean Martin standing beside Jerry Lewis waiting for the next explosion.

That long association deserves greater recognition when considering Dean's development as a singer. Amid all the pandemonium surrounding Martin and Lewis, something very serious was taking place. Dean was becoming a major vocalist before the eyes and ears of America. Every time the comedy stopped and Dean stepped toward the microphone, audiences were being introduced to another dimension of his talent.

Frequently, Dick Stabile was standing behind him.

The relationship naturally extended from stage, radio and television into the recording studio. Capitol recordings from the period carry Stabile's name as conductor or identify Dick Stabile and His Orchestra accompanying Dean. Flick through Bernard Thorpe's *Dean Martin: A Discography* and you'll see Stabile's name liberally scattered across its pages. Among those recordings was a song that would become inseparable from Dean...

Dean recorded "That's Amore" in 1953. Written by Harry Warren and Jack Brooks for Paramount's *The Caddy*, the song became one of the defining recordings of Dean's early career and ultimately one of the numbers most immediately associated with him.

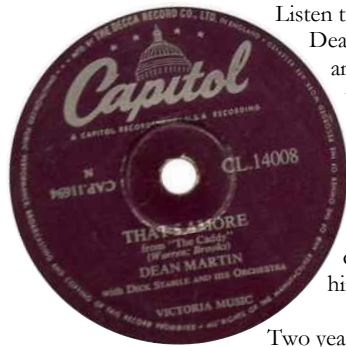
Behind Dean on the Capitol recording was Dick Stabile and His Orchestra. Stabile conducted the session, placing him at the center of a recording that would long outlive the Martin and Lewis partnership itself.

That fact alone deserves to place Stabile more →



DICK STABILE BEHIND THE BATON

→ prominently in the Dean Martin story.



Listen to “That’s Amore” with the relationship between Dean and Stabile in mind and the recording takes on another dimension. This was not simply an orchestra assembled to accompany a vocalist. The conductor and singer already possessed years of shared musical experience. Stabile understood how Dean phrased and how much room his voice required. The arrangement possesses movement and personality, yet Dean remains comfortably at its center. The music surrounds him without crowding him.

Two years later, Stabile would be present for another important milestone.

By 1955, tensions within the Martin and Lewis partnership had reached boiling point and the team was approaching its final year.

At the same time, Dean’s identity as an individual recording artist was becoming increasingly important.

On October 28, 1955, Dean recorded “Memories Are Made of This,” accompanied by the Easy Riders and an orchestra conducted by Dick Stabile.

The record became a tremendous success and one of the defining hits of Dean’s early solo recording career.

For anyone inclined to think of Stabile merely as “the Martin and Lewis bandleader,” that recording should cause a reconsideration.

Here was the musical director associated with America’s most famous comedy team conducting one of the records that helped establish beyond question that Dean Martin could command an audience entirely on his own.

There is something almost symbolic about the session.

During the years Dean was with Jerry, Stabile had stood at the back while the comedy exploded around the orchestra and audiences screamed for the world’s hottest comedy team.

Now he stood behind Dean while the singer recorded what was to become one of his most beloved songs.

This time there was no comedy routine and no nightclub pandemonium.

There was simply Dean Martin singing and Dick Stabile conducting.

There is a temptation to divide Dean’s career into convenient chapters: the fledgling period, then Martin and Lewis, the solo career, the Rat Pack era, Reprise, television and the autumn years.

Careers seldom divide themselves that neatly.

The people who surrounded Dean often crossed those boundaries, and Dick Stabile is an excellent example.

He unquestionably has a place in the Martin and Lewis history, but he also belongs to Dean Martin’s solo musical life.

Stabile remained associated with Martin and Lewis until their partnership ended in July 1956, ten years after Dean and Jerry first appeared together.

With their breakup came the end of one of the most unusual musical-director assignments in American entertainment.

Stabile had spent years conducting an orchestra behind two performers whose genius depended partly upon making audiences believe anything could happen.

He had accompanied Dean’s singing, followed Jerry’s comic disruptions, survived becoming part of the jokes and helped give the team’s radio and television appearances a musical identity.

His own career continued after Martin and Lewis.

Stabile recorded under his own name and led orchestras at prominent venues, including the Cocoanut Grove at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

He eventually relocated to New Orleans, where his band performed in the Blue Room of the Fairmont Hotel.

Yet his years with Martin and Lewis remained one of the

defining associations of his career.

There was even a final connection to Jerry Lewis.

After suffering a serious stroke in the late 1970s, Stabile recovered sufficiently to perform again.

According to biographical information preserved by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, his final public appearance came on Jerry Lewis’s 1980 Labor Day Muscular Dystrophy telethon.

Stabile died just weeks later at the age of 71.

It was a poignant final note to a professional relationship that had begun decades earlier during the extraordinary rise of Martin and Lewis.

Dick Stabile’s story offers an important lesson when looking back at those years. Sometimes the people standing in the background were not background figures at all.

For much of the Martin and Lewis partnership, Stabile occupied one of the most unusual positions in show business: he had to conduct an orchestra for a gifted singer while remaining alert to a comedian who might turn the carefully constructed musical moment upside down without warning. He helped provide musical continuity across nightclubs, radio, television, motion pictures and recordings. He became a character within their comedy while simultaneously remaining a serious musician responsible for the sound behind it.

Dick Stabile was not merely the orchestra leader standing behind Dean and Jerry. He was one of the musicians who traveled with them through an extraordinary period of American entertainment history, and one of the people who accompanied Dean through a crucial period of transformation: from nightclub singer and half of America’s most celebrated comedy team to a recording artist increasingly capable of standing entirely on his own.

The next time an old Martin and Lewis performance appears on the screen, it may be worth looking away from Dean and Jerry for just a moment.

Look toward the orchestra and find the man holding the baton. That is Dick Stabile, keeping the musicians together while Martin and Lewis threaten to turn everything upside down.

Then, when Dean steps toward the microphone and begins to sing, listen to what is happening behind him. Stabile is there too, doing what he had done so many times before—giving Dean the musical setting in which that unmistakable voice could simply do what it did best.

And that makes Dick Stabile more than a footnote to Martin and Lewis.

It makes him part of their sound, part of their history and part of the remarkable musical journey taking place behind the laughter. **DM**

Judy Stabile is the niece of Dick Stabile and daughter of Joe Stabile, Dick’s brother. (Joe played saxophone for the orchestra and later became Jerry’s musical director following the Martin and Lewis split.) Judy maintains her uncle’s legacy by managing The Official Dick Stabile Tribute (visit dickstabile.com)





Dean's radio performances
with CINDY WILLIFORD

**new
feature**

In our brand new semi-regular feature, we look at Dean Martin's radio performances, a part of his music career than can sometimes be overlooked.

"Pretty As A Picture"

The Martin and Lewis Show, NBC, April 4, 1952

Pretty as A Picture," written by Johnny Anz, was recorded by Dean for Capitol on January 21, 1952. The single was released as the b-side to "Won't You Surrender" (Capitol, F2001) on March 10. Less than a month later, on April 4, Dean performed the song for a nationwide radio audience on *The Martin And Lewis Show*.

In Dean's later, solo career he would make a point of performing different versions on TV of his studio songs. During his relatively early years, particularly for radio, such differences would be more subtle.

By early 1952, Dean and Jerry were already one of the hottest comedy teams in America. Their nightclub appearances drew crowds, their films were enormously successful, and their radio program brought Martin and Lewis directly into homes across the country. In the middle of everything that surrounded the act - the comedy, characters, sketches, and unpredictability - Dean's songs served another purpose: they gave the program a change of pace. Just as importantly, they reminded listeners that Martin and Lewis consisted of a comedian and a very accomplished singer.

"You're As Pretty as A Picture" was well suited to that role.

The song is a straightforward romantic number, and it does not ask the singer to overpower it. That worked naturally for Dean. Even at this relatively early point in his music career, he understood that a love song did not have to be oversold. His best performances often came from allowing the lyrics and melody to do their work while he simply sang them naturally.

A commercial recording was intended to stand on its own and could be heard repeatedly. A radio performance was on a particular evening and unlikely to be heard ever again by the general public.

That immediacy is an important part of appreciating Dean's radio work today. These performances were not simply alternate versions of songs he had recorded. They allow us to hear how his music functioned within the Martin and Lewis partnership itself.

Jerry could send the program in almost any direction, and the comedy could become wonderfully frantic. Then Dean would sing.

The contrast helped make both sides of the team more effective.

The musical interludes also did something very important: they helped sell records.

Listeners who had already heard or purchased the record could now hear him perform it on the program, while others may have been hearing the song for the first time. It's also worth remembering that the radio show and Dean's recording sessions were not always mirror images of one another: many songs he recorded for Capitol never appeared on the program, and by contrast, not every number performed on the broadcast had been issued as a commercial recording.

Radio provided a way for a new Dean Martin recording to reach the public, but it also functioned as its own separate stage for material that existed only in that live, weekly context.

Nevertheless, the remit of the radio show

meant that one could...*bear Dean sing in The Martin And Lewis Show! Then go out and buy his latest single!* NBC got their listeners, Capitol reaped the reward.

There is also something important about where Dean stood in his career at that moment.

The extraordinary success of Martin and Lewis could easily have overshadowed the individual talents that made the partnership work.

Yet week after week on radio, Dean was building a musical identity alongside the comedy. The songs mattered. They allowed audiences to become familiar not merely with Dean Martin, half of Martin and Lewis, but with Dean Martin the singer.

Listening more than seven decades later to a performance that was only ever intended to be heard once, may be the real value of work such as "Pretty as A Picture."

We know what came afterward. We know the major recordings, the albums, the television years, and the songs that eventually became inseparable from his name.

The listeners tuning in on April 4, 1952, knew none of that.

They were hearing Dean's career as it was happening.

That is what makes these early radio performances worth preserving and revisiting.

They take us back before anyone knew which songs would become standards, which records would become hits or how far Dean's career would eventually travel.

"You're As Pretty as A Picture" may be a small piece of that much larger story, but it captures Dean at an important point along the way: a song recorded, released and aired in the space of four months.

For one evening, it was simply one of Dean's newest songs.

Today, it allows us to listen again to a singer who was still building his remarkable career...one record, one broadcast and one song at a time. **DM**

The Cash Box, Music

Pretty As A Picture



BOSTON, MASS.—Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis are pictured with Donn Tippetts of WKXL, Concord, N. H., disk jockey at a party given for djs at Boston's Sheraton-Plaza Hotel. Dean and Jerry were appearing at the Metropolitan Theater in the city. Both are scheduled for recording sessions together at Capitol for the first time. Dean's latest waxing is "Pretty As A Picture".

TAKING AMERICA BY STORM



The partnership began at Atlantic City's 500 Club, but CINDY WILLIFORD considers that simply putting Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis together did not immediately create the act America would eventually know.

Dean could sing and Jerry could perform comedy, but at first those were essentially two separate talents occupying the same stage. What changed everything was their realization that they were far more entertaining when they stopped respecting the boundaries between those talents.

Jerry began interrupting Dean's songs, interfering with the musicians and disrupting whatever Dean was attempting to accomplish. Dean, rather than trying to compete with Jerry's enormous energy, reacted to it. The more frantic Jerry became, the calmer Dean appeared, and a glance, a pause or an understated remark from Dean could suddenly become as funny as Jerry's most elaborate physical routine.

Martin and Lewis were funniest not when they took turns entertaining an audience but when the audience watched them interact with each other. Dean's song could become Jerry's playground, while Jerry's interruption could provide Dean with the setup for a perfectly timed response. A mistake could become material, an audience reaction could change the direction of a routine, and the musicians could find themselves drawn into whatever was happening.

Instead of protecting the structure of a conventional floor show, Dean and Jerry discovered how much more exciting the performance became when they appeared to be tearing that structure apart.

The nightclub was the perfect environment in which to develop such an act. Audiences sat only a short distance from the performers, often eating, drinking and talking while the floor show was underway. An entertainer could not assume that everyone in the room was waiting attentively for the next number; attention had to be earned. There were no second takes, and no two audiences reacted exactly alike. Martin and Lewis learned to use that uncertainty to their advantage, creating the impression that anything could happen once they stepped in front of an audience. Soon people were anticipating Jerry's interruptions almost as much as they anticipated Dean's songs, waiting to see what Jerry would do and, just as importantly, how Dean would respond.

That relationship was considerably more complicated than the familiar description of Jerry as the comedian and Dean as the straight man might suggest. Dean certainly provided the calm center against which Jerry's comedy could explode, but he was never merely standing beside Jerry to feed him lines. He could finish a routine with a quiet remark, turn Jerry's own joke against him or produce a laugh simply with an expression. Jerry's comedy, meanwhile, became more outrageous because there was someone beside him who refused to become outrageous. Dean's composure gave Jerry something to attack, while Jerry's chaos made Dean appear even smoother. Their personalities did not compete with one another; they complemented one another.

Amid all the comedy, Dean remained a genuine vocalist, giving Martin and Lewis a dimension that a conventional comedy team did not possess. He could return to a song and completely change the atmosphere of the room. An audience that had been laughing moments earlier could suddenly become quiet and listen, only to be pulled back into the comedy when Jerry intruded again. Dean did not have to stop being a singer for Martin and Lewis to succeed, nor did Jerry's comedy have to be confined to a separate portion of the program. Music and comedy could coexist, overlap and collide, and that became one of the distinguishing features of the partnership.

Word spread quickly that Martin and Lewis were something different. Their appeal was difficult to describe because it was not simply a matter of material. People could repeat a joke or

describe Jerry interrupting one of Dean's songs, but that did not capture the timing between them or the feeling that the performance might suddenly move in an unexpected direction.

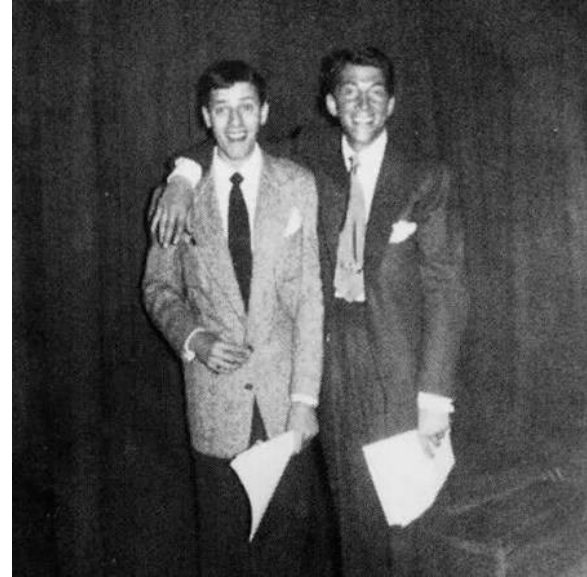
Audiences wanted to see for themselves what Jerry would do to Dean and what Dean would do about it.

The apparent spontaneity made each performance feel as though it belonged to the people who happened to be in the room that night.

Their momentum soon carried them beyond Atlantic City.

In 1947, appearances at New York's Loew's State Theatre

placed Martin and Lewis before much larger audiences and demonstrated that the chemistry developed in intimate nightclub rooms could survive on a major theater stage. The following year brought another important step when they reached the city's Copacabana, one of the most prestigious nightclubs in America and a room frequented by celebrities, columnists, agents and producers. Only two years after the partnership had begun, Dean and Jerry were appearing in one of the country's most important rooms, and audiences were increasingly coming specifically to see Martin and Lewis.



The speed of their ascent was remarkable. Newspaper coverage carried their reputation beyond the people who had actually witnessed the act, while the crowds and expectations surrounding their appearances continued to grow. A Martin and Lewis engagement was becoming an event. Audiences were not simply expecting polished comedy routines and familiar songs; they wanted the unpredictability associated with Dean and Jerry and the possibility that the performance might appear to come apart at any moment.

What looked uncontrolled actually depended upon an increasingly precise understanding between the two men. Jerry knew how far he could push a moment, while Dean knew how long to wait before responding.

Nightclubs and theaters, however, could only expose Martin and Lewis to the people able to enter the room. No matter how prestigious the engagement or how large the theater, there remained a physical limit to the audience.

Radio changed that equation.

When *The Martin & Lewis Show* reached network radio in April 1949, Dean and Jerry gained access to listeners across the country.

People who had never been inside or even heard of the 500 Club, the Copacabana or Loew's State Theatre could now become familiar with the personalities that had created so much excitement.

But radio presented a considerable challenge, particularly for Jerry. Much of his comedy depended upon what audiences could see. His expressions, movements and physical interference with Dean had been central to the nightclub act, yet none of that was visible to a listener sitting beside a radio hundreds of miles away.

The broadcasts demonstrated, however, that the Martin and Lewis act also had a recognizable sound. Jerry could interrupt, complain, shout and send a scene toward chaos with his voice alone, while Dean could answer with the same relaxed delivery that characterized his stage personality. Listeners could hear the contrast and imagine much of the rest.

The radio program necessarily operated within a more structured environment than their nightclub appearances. →

TAKING AMERICA BY STORM

→ There were writers, scripts, guest stars, musical arrangements, commercial obligations and strict running times. Yet within that framework, Dean and Jerry could preserve enough of their established personalities to make the program recognizable to Martin and Lewis.

Radio also gave Dean something particularly important: a regular national platform as a singer.

The comedy attracted enormous attention, but listeners were also hearing Dean perform popular songs, standards and romantic ballads. Week after week, America was becoming familiar not only with Martin and Lewis as a team but with, and more importantly for us, Dean Martin's voice.

Radio soon began strengthening the personal appearances from which Martin and Lewis had emerged. Someone who heard them at home could want to see them in person, while someone who had already witnessed the act could tune in and recognize the personalities of the partnership. Their nightclub reputation created curiosity about the radio program, and national radio exposure increased demand for their appearances.

The Martin and Lewis product was traveling farther than any nightclub engagement could carry it.

At almost the same moment, Hollywood came calling.

Producer Hal B. Wallis recognized the possibilities of the team, and Paramount brought Dean and Jerry to motion pictures. Their supporting roles in *My Friend Irma* in 1949 introduced them to movie audiences, including many people who had never seen them perform live or listened regularly to their radio program. Motion pictures expanded their reach again. A

nightclub engagement belonged to one city and one period of time, while a film could play repeatedly in theaters across the country.

Their film career accelerated rapidly. *My Friend Irma Goes West* followed, then a succession of Paramount pictures that established Martin and Lewis as major box-office attractions in their own right.

Their names together became a selling point, and audiences understood what 'Martin and Lewis' promised: comedy, music, personality and the familiar contrast between the relaxed Dean and the explosive Jerry. The movies also restored the visual element that radio could only suggest, allowing audiences everywhere to

see Jerry's physical comedy and Dean's reactions.

By this point, something much larger than a successful nightclub partnership was developing. Dean and Jerry were becoming part of American popular culture. They could be seen in person, heard on radio and watched at the movies, with each medium expanding their audience. Their fame was no longer tied to a particular club, city or performance. The two men who had been trying to make an simple act work in Atlantic City only a few years earlier were becoming nationally recognizable personalities.

Television added another dimension to that fame.

When Dean and Jerry had become a team in 1946, television remained beyond the everyday experience of most American families. Within a few years, sets were entering homes at an extraordinary rate, and the new medium proved almost perfectly suited to Martin and Lewis. On *The Colgate Comedy Hour*, viewers could experience something closer to what those early

nightclub audiences had witnessed.

They could see Jerry moving around Dean, watch the interruptions and physical comedy unfold, and catch Dean's expressions as the madness developed beside him.

Television also demonstrated how much Dean could accomplish by appearing to do very little.

The camera could capture a raised eyebrow, a sideways glance or the hint of a smile, giving his understated reactions an impact they might not have had in the back of a large theater. Jerry's comedy could fill the stage, but television allowed viewers to see Dean quietly responding to it at the same time. Dean could also look into the camera and sing directly to the audience at home, bringing the relaxed intimacy of his vocal style into living rooms across the country.

The camera loved Dean, and Dean knew how to encourage its love.

The journey from the 500 Club to national television had taken only a handful of years, and the speed of that transformation remains one of the most extraordinary parts of the Martin and Lewis story. They did not conquer one medium, leave it behind and then begin working on another. Their careers overlapped the mediums. Nightclub and theater appearances remained important while radio expanded their national audience. Motion pictures increased their fame while they continued performing before live crowds, and television brought them into American homes while audiences were still buying tickets to their latest films. Kids could go to their local stores and regularly buy *The Adventures of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis* DC comic book.

That visibility created a level of fame that would have been difficult to achieve through any single medium. A nightclub appearance could generate newspaper attention, radio could build an audience for personal appearances, movies could make their faces recognizable across the country, and television could bring those familiar personalities directly into the home.

Dean and Jerry moved through this increasingly interconnected entertainment world with astonishing speed, but their success depended upon something more important than simply being in the right place at the right time.

The essential Martin and Lewis relationship survived every transition.

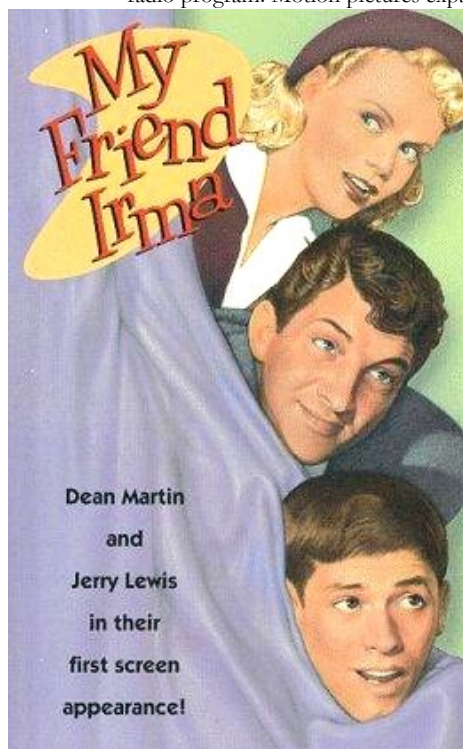
Whether audiences encountered them in a nightclub, theater, radio broadcast, comic book, motion picture or television program, Dean and Jerry remained recognizable. Their surroundings changed, but the basic attraction did not. Audiences felt that they knew them as personalities rather than simply as characters in a particular show or film. Crowds gathered because Martin and Lewis were appearing, newspapers followed them, photographers waited for them, and theaters promoted their names. The entertainment industry in which they had once struggled for attention was now eager to capitalize on their popularity.

Beneath the enormous machinery surrounding their fame remained the discovery they had made at the beginning. Dean and Jerry were more entertaining when they stopped behaving like two separate performers.

By the early 1950s, Martin and Lewis were no longer merely successful entertainers. They were also two men who could hardly have seemed more different. Dean Martin brought the voice, the ease, the restraint and an instinctive sense of timing. Jerry Lewis brought physical energy, disruption and comic abandon.

But their differences were obstacles to overcome, and were the reason the partnership ultimately suffered. They were *too* different, had far too diverging outlooks and preferred career paths.

At the end of the day, they were still Martin and Lewis, two wildly contrasting personalities standing, at least for a while, side by side. From the nightclub floor to the radio airwaves and into a level of fame few entertainment teams would ever experience, Martin and Lewis had taken America by storm. **DM**





Dean on the small screen,
with **RON IVESON**

Irascible excitement sums up Jerry's contribution to the team and Dean with relaxed mirth. 'Lighting in a bottle' said Jerry describing the duo but the top of the bottle often shot off! At their height and at their best they often tried to outdo each other, not as a put down but to raise the stakes and uncork the chaos! There are so many times you can see them eyeing each other and egging each other on for laughs, for their own enjoyment. And the magic of the team was seeing this in their barely rehearsed sketches. We are invited in, to vicariously participate in the glee and one of the best examples of this was their shaving sketch for NBC's 1951 season of *The Colgate Comedy Hour*.

For most men a shaving routine is a chore and might not sound like much of a comedy act. After all, shaving is just an everyday job that most men do without thinking about it.

But Dean and Jerry had a way of taking an ordinary situation and turning it into something completely chaotic.

The misnomer of Dean 'the straight man' is undone in nearly every sketch he is in and this is no exception.

He could stand looking on, completely relaxed and still get laughs.

Jerry was an energetic, physically mischievous child often pulling faces with manic movements that drove the comedy routine.

The less Dean seemed to react, the funnier Jerry became.

Dean's relaxed attitude made Jerry's behaviour look even more outrageous. This was one of the secrets of their success. They understood that they did not have to be doing the same thing. They needed to be different. The audience understood the relationship between them almost immediately.

Their comedy was also helped by the fact that they seemed to enjoy working together. There are moments in their performances when one of them starts laughing at what the other is doing. Instead of ruining the routine, this often made it funnier.

The audience could see that they were enjoying themselves. It feels as though Dean and Jerry are playing around with each other and seeing how far they can take the joke.

Jerry's physical comedy worked especially well on screen because viewers could see every little expression and movement. His face could become part of the punchline.

Dean, meanwhile, had the kind of presence that worked perfectly on camera. He could look at Jerry with a simple expression and make the audience laugh without saying much.

The shaving sketch also shows how much their comedy depended on timing.

The routine worked because there was a rhythm between the two men. Dean would do something, Jerry would react, and

then Dean would respond to Jerry. It was almost like watching a conversation without needing many words.

It was symbiotic.

The humour comes from watching these two completely different personalities interact. That is probably why their old routines are still enjoyable today.

Elliot has written about how comedy can sometimes become dated, especially when it depends on references that people no longer understand.

But the basic relationship between Dean and Jerry is easy to understand.

Physical comedy is ageless because it speaks of the silliness that every child loves.

Often when one person is trying to behave normally and another person is making it impossible laughter ensues; from school to the workplace and to the home and sometimes in the darkest of situations.

The shaving sketch is therefore more than just an old comedy routine, it is a reminder of why Martin and Lewis became such an important part of American entertainment.

They didn't need a complicated set or an elaborate story. Give them a mirror, a simple everyday activity and each other, and they could create something people wanted to watch and feel part of, it was visceral comedy.

In this routine the setting is simple: the two men are at a mirror, and shaving becomes the centre of the routine. The mirror itself gives them another way to play with the comedy because the audience can see both the men and their reflections.

It becomes more than just two men standing in front of a mirror. Their movements, expressions and reactions become the joke. They are literally mirroring each other.

What is fascinating about this sketch is that it is a mime, Jerry is not shouting or looking at the camera, instead we are watching them watch each other. Dean said in the 1983 BBC interview what made them work was that 'we played to each other' and no more so than in this sketch.

Each carefully copying the other's movements, when one man brings the razor towards his face, the other performs the same movement in the opposite direction. Because they are facing one another, their movements are precisely reversed. This is funny because the performers behave as though the other person is not actually there. They maintain the imaginary "mirror" relationship instead of acknowledging that they are copying one another. It also taps into Jerry's personal comedic history: his miming to records act.

The timing is impeccable, well at least at first, cleverly, until the audience is sufficiently drawn into the heart of the sketch then it falls apart, deliberately for laughs. They gradually make the movements more complicated while continuing to mirror each other. At first, copying each other's movements is amusing because it is unexpected. As the sequence continues, the audience starts anticipating the next movement. The performers can then make the movements increasingly exaggerated. Dean's movements tend to appear smooth and controlled and Jerry's are typically exaggerated.

That is what makes the performance particularly impressive. They normally rely on being opposites but in this sketch, they have to work as one coordinated performer and boy do they enjoy it. And what starts as artistry descends into tomfoolery as both end up in a foam fight.

That was the magic of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. They made comedy look easy, and when they were at their best, even something as ordinary as shaving could become a memorable piece of entertainment. I'll have to remember that at 6am! **DM**

ESSENTIAL INFO

NETWORK
ORIGINAL RELEASE
NUMBER OF SEASONS
WHERE CAN I WATCH IT?

NBC
December 30, 1951
6
YouTube
(excerpt only)



Movie Moments

Selecting the greatest film in one genre or the best movie ever made by this or that team invites alternative viewpoints and disagreement, possibly leading to vigorous debate supporting these passionate perspectives. Nevertheless...which of Dean & Jerry's movies are the best of the best? Guest contributor Richard addresses and answers simmering question, knowing that this crosses the line from cinema history into that of subjective speculative opinion.

Many fans think everything made by Laurel & Hardy or Abbott & Costello are wonderful comic creations while discerning buffs know that many factors contribute to the relative success of the objects of their mutual desire and not everything the vintage clowns committed to celluloid could be considered classic. When selecting the five greatest movies made by Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Laurel & Hardy, the Marx Brothers and the other supreme screen comedians of the golden age of Hollywood, it is fairly easy to determine the best of the best in their classic cinematic canons.

But what about Dean and Jerry?

Which are the top five Martin & Lewis movies of them all?

We all know that Martin & Lewis, this last of the great movie comedy teams, was together for exactly ten years to the day. The first three years of that partnership were the nightclub era during which Dean & Jerry carefully built their nationwide following crisscrossing the country, giving thousands of performances in hundreds of nightclubs from New York to Hollywood. The last seven of those team-up years contained all sixteen of the feature films they released through Paramount Pictures, three seasons of their radio show, every single *Colgate Comedy Hour* they hosted on television and all of their other touring, broadcast and telethon activities, packed into those productive years.

While the essence of what made Dean & Jerry so wildly hilarious in front of live audiences is best appreciated by watching those *Colgate* shows, most fans look to their big screen appearances for Paramount as the primary function of the team.

The movies come first, everything else is secondary.

Of the classic teams, Laurel & Hardy made 106 films over twenty years, and Abbott & Costello starred in 36 features over sixteen years. Only The Marx Brothers made less films than Martin & Lewis, but they spread their 13 features over a twenty-year period.

Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis starred in sixteen films over seven years, eleven for producer Hal Wallis, to whom they were under contract, and five as their own independent productions, most under their York Pictures banner. Other than the first cheapie misfire that the team was responsible for, *At War With the Army*, the other four York pictures were virtually indistinguishable from the Wallis-produced productions other than the win ratio of better product was higher with Jerry and Paul Jones overseeing the decision-making than it was with their Wallis-produced pictures.

On examining the sixteen films to conduct this exercise, the cream of the crop easily rises to the top.

But first, let's eliminate a few.

My Friend Irma and *My Friend Irma Goes West*, do not star Martin & Lewis, although they easily steal both films. Their third, the aforementioned low-budget *At War With The Army*, was an adaptation of a stage show that was ill-suited to the team's talents and, although a massive-money maker, is the most difficult of the team's movies to sit through. These three are out.

That leaves thirteen movies to consider for inclusion in their

Dean on the big screen,
with RICHARD S GREENE

top five.

Another we can quickly eliminate is their first color film, *Money from Home*. It was a gimmicky 3D movie with a lackluster script and a wooden leading lady. Out.

Their second to last film, *Pardners*, is a terrific concept, but Dean was pretty checked out during the making of the film, which was released theatrically on the actual day the team broke up and gave their last live performance. A rare misfire from York. Out.

3 Ring Circus from 1954 is a contender for their worst film, barely coming ahead of *At War With The Army*. The first Martin & Lewis feud peaked during this prickly production, leading to an unengaged duo, a flat script and a horrific finale with the little screaming girl from *Them!* wearing leg braces and schmalz-shaming clown Jerry by going into gleeful hysterics when he starts crying his little clown heart out. Definitely out.

And then there were ten.

Artists and Models (1955) is Technicolor eye-candy with magnificent costumes, capable direction by Frank Tashlin, appealing musical numbers and The Bat-Lady (*not* the Fat-Lady) but it ultimately falls flat by rushing in a third-act spy plot that was wholly unnecessary and by straining for laughs. Nope.

Hollywood or Bust, their last film made under unbearable circumstances with the team not even on speaking terms, should have been among their worst. However, it is surprisingly engaging, has great songs from Dean, a fun cross-country road trip plot and the magnificent Mr. Bascom. It's far from their worst, but not among their best. It was released *six months* after they broke up. Not in my top five.

Jumping Jacks is a course-correction comedy for *At War With the Army*, a much better version of the same basic picture, lots of fun but also not a top five contender. Sorry about that, Dog-Face Dolan.

That's My Boy may surprise many fans as not being in the top five. It's a great motion picture comedy, a well-directed character comedy about a boisterous father and his milquetoast son. What it is not, is a great Martin & Lewis movie. That leaves six.

Scared Stiff is a terrific Martin & Lewis movie. Dean gives one of his best performances out of the sixteen pictures, fully engaged and subtly hilarious against Jerry's manic energy. This, plus Carmen Miranda and the Hope & Crosby cameo makes *Scared Stiff* a spooktastic winner! Coming in at number six, it almost makes the Top Five. But not quite.



5 I call *The Stooge* a pre-cognitively autobiographical comedy, fascinating to view in retrospect of all that was about to unfold in their real careers. The movie was shelved for nearly two years because Paramount was worried about how the public would react to the self-centered and rude egotist that Dean Martin plays superbly. But they needn't have worried: it was another Martin & Lewis box office smash and riveting viewing for fans.



4 *You're Never Too Young*: the first of three in this top five that were York Productions with Jerry and producer Paul Jones calling the shots behind the scenes. After the difficult production of *3 Ring Circus*, Dean & Jerry made nice and gave their all, for the last time on film, in *You're Never Too Young*. The musical sequences here are second only to those in *Living It Up*. The comedy is top rate with nightclub material being incorporated for the final cinematic time. This was their last truly great film.



3 Next is their final black & white picture and another York winner, *The Caddy*. This is the film that gave Dean Martin his first big hit single (but didn't reach number one on the Billboard charts!) in "That's Amore". Another autobiographical plot concerned with the team getting together, breaking up and getting back together for the finale with a wonderfully bizarre ending, *The Caddy* is Martin & Lewis magic. Or, should I say, Joe Anthony & Har-

vey Miller magic!



The top two of Dean and Jerry's comedies are virtually exchangeable as to which one deserves to be on top.

2 However, coming in at number two is *Living It Up*, the best movie that Martin & Lewis ever made with their single greatest musical moments on film, the frenzied Jitterbug scene and the sublime "Every Street's A Boulevard". It presents Dean Martin giving his finest comedic performance in a Martin & Lewis film as the quack doctor who misdiagnoses Jerry with a fatal malady, hilarious every time he puts those Clark Kent doctor glasses on. Jerry's manic energy is released in explosive spurts, perfectly timed for maximum hilarity.



So why isn't *Living It Up* their best film, topping this list? →

Movie Moments

DEAN MARTIN JERRY LEWIS

HAL WALLIS'
PRODUCTION



SAILOR BEWARE

co-starring

CORINNE CALVET and MARION MARSHALL

with ROBERT STRAUSS

DIRECTED BY Hal Walker · SCREENPLAY BY James Allardice & Martin Rackin · ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE BY John Grant · ADAPTATION BY Elwood Ullman · From a Play by Kenyon Nicholson & Charles Robinson



A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

→ Because it isn't *Sailor Beware*.

1 *Sailor Beware* is the *funniest* film that Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis ever made. From start to finish. It's the first *authentic* Martin & Lewis movie.

It incorporated a healthy amount of their best stage material. It very nearly captures the manic energy their nightclub appearances always abounded with. It is riotously funny from beginning to end. Dean and Jerry are young and vital and compelling, movie stars owning the screen for the first time, commanding the picture for each of the film's 108 minutes. It was their biggest box office success for good reason. While the onscreen Martin & Lewis were, out of necessity, controlled and sanitized, the wackadoodle energy that *Sailor Beware* gives off present the team at their least constricted in a motion picture. It's not quite the 'anything can happen' vibe of the live *Colgate* appearances, but it's close enough.



Of course, this list is all quite subjective. There are many who probably consider *Artists and Models* or *That's My Boy* to be their favorite Martin & Lewis film - and I think that's great.

If those films bring you joy, then go right on enjoying them as their considered best.

As long as people are watching these vintage comedies and sharing them with their friends and family, debating which one is better than which, that is the win.

Keep them playing.

Keep them relevant.

And leave 'em laughing. **DM**



Richard S. Greene is the author of *Marketing Mayhem! Selling Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis to Post-War America*. This first book in the classic comedy marketing series which collects one-sheet posters, lobby cards, pressbook advertising, publicity stills, record and magazine and comic book covers, merchandise and promotional products and many surprises was followed by five more; Advertising *Anarchy* on Abbott & Costello, two volumes of *Promotional Pandemonium* on Laurel & Hardy, *Bantering Ballyhoo* on W. C. Fields and the newest, and first of two covering the Marx Brothers, *Marx Madvertising Book One: The Paramount Era*. Coming 2027 is a volume on Bing Crosby and Bob Hope called *Road to Bali-hoo!*



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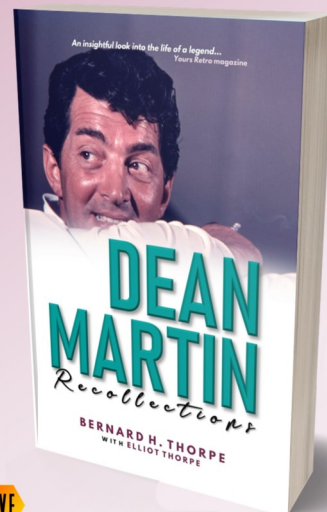
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Side By Side

with CINDY WILLIFORD

What does it mean to preserve a legacy? At first glance, the answer seems simple. Preserve the photographs. Protect the recordings. Save the newspaper clippings. Catalog the memorabilia. Safeguard the artifacts that remain. Those things certainly matter. They are tangible reminders of a life and a career, and each has its place. But preserving a legacy is about far more than preserving objects.

To me, preserving a legacy means intentionally protecting, sharing and passing down the stories, values, lessons, and standards of someone who made a lasting impact. It means caring enough to seek the truth, respecting the historical record, and understanding that every discovery (no matter how small) adds another piece to a much larger story. A legacy is not something we create after a person's life has ended. It already exists.

Our responsibility is to preserve it faithfully. That may sound straightforward, but in today's world it can be surprisingly difficult.

Stories grow over time. Memories fade. Assumptions become accepted as fact simply because they have been repeated often enough. Before long, myth begins to replace history.

That is why research matters. It is why original newspapers matter. It is why interviews, photographs, production records, television appearances, radio broadcasts, and firsthand accounts matter. It is why AI shouldn't be used to create histories.

No single source tells the whole story. Each offers a different perspective, another detail, another piece of the puzzle. When those pieces are thoughtfully assembled, they allow us to see history with greater clarity and understanding.

I've learned that preserving a legacy isn't about proving what I hope to find. It is about following the evidence wherever it leads. Sometimes that evidence confirms what we've always believed. Other times it challenges long-held assumptions.

Either way, the truth deserves to be told.

When that truth concerns Dean Martin, it becomes especially meaningful.

To much of the world, Dean Martin is simply remembered as another crooner from the 1950s.

But here was a man who spent decades refining his craft. He was a gifted vocalist whose phrasing remains instantly recognizable. He possessed remarkable comic timing, often communicating as much with a glance as another performer could with an entire page of dialogue. He respected audiences, valued his colleagues, loved his family, and carried himself with a quiet confidence that never demanded attention, yet always commanded it.

The public often saw only what Dean wanted them to see.

That, perhaps, is one of the greatest challenges in preserving his legacy. It requires looking beyond the stereotypes. Beyond the familiar stories. Beyond the headlines that often-favored entertainment over accuracy. It requires patience, curiosity, and a willingness to keep asking questions.

People occasionally ask me why we devote so much time to this work. The honest answer is that I personally never imagined it would become such an important part of *my* life. What began as admiration for an entertainer gradually became something much deeper, a desire to understand the man behind the legend and to ensure that his story would continue to be told with honesty and respect. This journey has unfolded one discovery at a time.

There is still so much left to uncover. Hidden in old newspapers were forgotten stories. In interviews, photographs, radio broadcasts, television appearances, and personal recollections were pieces of a much larger picture waiting to be assembled. Every discovery adds context, corrects a misconception, or revealed another dimension of the man behind the legend.

Popular stories had often overshadow the historical record, while countless moments that helped define his life and career have quietly faded from memory.

That realization changed the way I approached this work.

I stopped searching for interesting stories and began searching for truthful ones.

There is a difference.

Interesting stories entertain for a moment. Truthful stories endure. They honor not only the person whose legacy is being preserved, but also those who will one day look to history in search of understanding.

Some people collect memorabilia. Some collect autographs. I suppose I collect all that and more: I also collect *understanding*.

Every answer leads to another question. Every discovery opens another door. Every piece of history invites a closer look.

Far from becoming repetitive, the journey becomes richer with each passing discovery because every new one helps us see the whole picture a little more clearly.

That is why I believe preserving a legacy is about far more than remembering the past. It is about serving the future.

The generation that knew Dean Martin personally grows smaller with each passing year. Firsthand memories are precious, but they are also finite. If those memories are not recorded, researched, and preserved, they disappear.

History deserves better than that.

Dean deserves better than that.

Future generations deserve the opportunity to discover Dean Martin through facts rather than fiction, through authentic history rather than popular mythology and artificially-generated creations.

The DMA has that responsibility, and it is one that cannot be rushed.

It requires patience. It requires humility.

Most of all, it requires respect, for the historical record, for the people who lived it, and for those who will one day inherit it.

History does not belong to us. We are simply entrusted with it for a little while. Long after every article has been written, every photograph has been shared, and every conversation has faded into memory, the work of preservation will continue. New researchers will ask new questions. New discoveries will be made. New generations will come to appreciate Dean Martin in ways we cannot yet imagine.

If the work the DMA does today helps make those discoveries possible tomorrow, then we will consider our time well spent.

That, to me, is the true privilege of preservation.

It isn't about recognition. It isn't about ownership. It isn't about becoming part of the story.

It is about making certain the story endures.

Perhaps that is the greatest responsibility any biographer, historian, archivist, or preservationist can accept: to leave the historical record a little stronger than they found and to pass it forward with honesty, dignity, and care. If, years from now, someone comes to know Dean Martin not through rumor, AI or assumption but through truth, then every hour spent researching, every article written, every photograph preserved, and every conversation shared will have been worthwhile. Because in the end, preserving a legacy isn't simply about remembering yesterday.

It's about making sure tomorrow remembers it well.

It is what our founder Bernard H Thorpe set out to do when he was authorized by Dean to create the DMA back in 1960.

We still adhere strictly to that mantra, and that's what sets the DMA apart: honesty, truth, reverence and unalloyed respect to Mr Dean Martin and his legacy. **DM**



The Legacy of Martin & Lewis

Concluding our celebrations, in this epilogue, ELLIOT THORPE considers Dean and Jerry's legacy in the 21st century.

When we watch Dino, it's clear he had a wicked sense of humor and excellent timing. On *The Dean Martin Show*, strip away the notion of cue cards, of the infamy and misnomer of him never having rehearsed (he didn't) and we witness his natural comedy coming through, whether it be the opening monolog, sketches and musical numbers. He could also take a joke: the collapsing piano, the mystery guests behind the door, fluffing lines. It's all there for us to see and to enjoy, to be in on the joke. It followed when the show regenerated into *The Dean Martin Celebrity Roast*.

On the cabaret stage, he performed most of his songs with a comedic slant ('You wanna hear me sing my songs properly? Go buy my records,' he would say.) There isn't a moment goes by where he isn't ridiculing his orchestra, or Ken Lane, or his peers, even the lyrics of the songs themselves. My particular favorites are "June In January" where he plays with the pronunciations and mocks the level of sound the orchestra is producing, and "That's Amore" where he holds the notes for longer than he should! Most famous of course is "Pennies From Heaven".

Elvis Presley would even parody the lyrics of his own songs, declaring that he was inspired by Dino.

It's all done with respect: there's no malice, no hidden motive. It's Dino being Dino - about as close as he allowed us to get to his true nature.

We are Dean Martin fans, united in our adoration for the man...and we can be united in our divide of what era of his career we think is the best. We can be equally divided into those who like Jerry and those who don't.

Whether you like Jerry or not depends on when Dino came into your life and how: if it was via his solo career, then arguably you probably prefer Dino post-1956.

If you grew up watching Martin and Lewis, I'd hesitantly bet you're a *bona fide*, card-carrying straight-up Martin and Lewis fan. And that's fine: we're all allowed our opinions, all allowed our irks and loves.

Being the straight man to a manically intense and uncontrol-

lable force such as Jerry Lewis was something Dino struggled with almost from day one. So Dino *himself* being a fan of Martin and Lewis or not is a whole other subject for another time.

Yet there is something about the pair that offers a unique perspective on the typical comedy double act.

While the basic set-up is not unique, in that one of the two is dominant (usually the "serious", controlling personality) while the other is the down-trodden foil (normally driven by the perceived level of intelligence or physical attributes), Martin and Lewis brought something different to the table that only a very handful of double acts had been successful at before them.

Laurel and Hardy perfectly encapsulated that set-up.

Here we were presented with Oliver Hardy: pompous, self-important, self-aggrandizing, opinionated and belittling; in Stan, we are coerced into believing he was stupid, not worthy of opinions and always trod under foot by the apparently bigger person (in this case literally). But we all knew, Ollie needed Stan. Stan maybe didn't need Ollie quite as much, simply because Stan was the man.

While the dynamic always appeared one sided, together they were stronger.

Paramount had Dean and Jerry...Universal, Bud and Lou.

Abbott and Costello appeared on the scene a little before Martin and Lewis and had a more brusque approach to each other: Costello's character was far more likely to stand up to Abbott's, even though Abbott would project the more dominant personality. Like Laurel and Hardy, together was better. Their work in radio, TV and film took them to the heights of being the most popular comedy team of the 1940s and 1950s and, globally, the highest-paid entertainers during the Second World War.

Martin and Lewis very much followed the pattern of both these acts: there is no denying Dean's character was the smooth-talking, womanizing, good-looking superior, while Jerry the buffoon, the man-child, clownish and, quite simply, moronic.

Yet at the same time they weren't: of the scripted perfor-

mances (whether that was their NBC radio shows and *The Colgate Comedy Hour* or their Paramount pictures), sometimes Dean would be placed as the end user, the failed star who would need Jerry's infantile behavior and innocence to find success. Whatever the set-up, they would start out as friends, fall out and become estranged but work towards making their companionship whole again. It was a tried and tested formula: pick any radio show or movie of theirs at random and it would be there, maybe hidden in plain sight, but always there...

Their uniqueness was in the little man having the ability to become the dominant partner, tipping the set-up not necessarily on its head, but certainly skewing it. This stemmed wholly from the fact that Jerry dominated the pair behind the scenes: it's well-documented elsewhere that he was touchy, overbearing, demanding and difficult. If he really was or not is not for us to judge, but it sure pushed Dean into a subservient role, so there surely has to be some truth in it.

But on screen, Jerry's fierce physical approach to comedy was finely counterbalanced by Dean's calm demeanor. Yet when Dean was *allowed* to be the funny one, *damn* was he *funny* (the bath scene in *Artists and Models*, for a start). Dean sang, Jerry would invariably join in, they would find common ground, and the film/radio show/comedy hour would end on a positive high.

The next generation coming up behind us have new values, different opinions, fresh ways of looking at the world. Most intellectual properties that have existed for decades are not quite the same now as they were at their conception: the *Star Trek* franchise for example, the *James Bond* movies (even the continuation novels)...there are echoes of what they once were weaved into the modern fabric of many of these types of legacy assets, yet have something fundamentally different about them.

Comedy has had the same "makeover": contemporary comedy *is* different. It has to be different. What my grandparents saw as funny is light years away from what my children think is funny.

Humour and comedy have evolved throughout history, adapting to the values, beliefs, and sensibilities of each era. From Shakespeare's wry satire in Tudor England to P.G. Wodehouse's witty British humour in the early twentieth century and the observational approaches of people like Bob Newhart and Bill Burr, comedy has always reflected the societies in which it was created. Beyond providing entertainment, it has offered insight into human nature, challenged social norms, and encouraged audiences to view the world from new perspectives. As society continues to change, comedy evolves alongside it, reflecting the concerns, cultures and experiences of future generations.

Dean and Jerry represent a bygone era.

There is an innocence about the Martin and Lewis characters (yes, *characters*...even *caricatures* of the real individuals to some extent) that is timeless. They come from an age of opulence and fun, a post-war world that promised excitement and success, struck through with pathos and melancholy. It's a world that doesn't exist anymore and likely won't again.

So we as their fans look upon their world with fondness, with the knowledge that it makes us feel good, and with the awareness, whether subconscious or not, that it's Dean and Jerry's world we miss.

Whether their legacy truly lives on is for debate: in their heyday they were the kings of comedy, just as Abbott and Costello were, the Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy...solo acts like Charlie Chaplin and Red Skelton, W.C. Fields and Jack Benny. As we look at the 1970s, when the new wave of comedians arrived (Robin Williams, Richard Pryor, John Belushi, George Carlin, Steve Martin...) they found inspiration in those greats, amongst them our very own Dean and Jerry.

Influences were clear, respect to the past was fundamental to the creation of the next step in comedy.

As time goes on, the comedians of today, people like Kristen Wiig and the cast of SNL, find inspiration in the 70s comedi-

ans and acts from the '80s. Occasionally would they cite older comedic models that hark back to the '60s, but I will go out on a limb here and say that they rarely if ever cite comedians of the '40s and '50s as being springboards: society has just moved on too much to really warrant long term legacies from the likes of Martin and Lewis *et al.*

We have to be brutally realistic here.

Because we are fans of Dean Martin and, by osmosis or otherwise, also fans of Jerry Lewis, we are biased.

We *want* their legacies to remain, to influence, to be eternal. So for *us*, they do.

Certainly *us* all being here indicates some level, some desire, to return to the halcyon days of Dean and his peers. And why not?

For the wider global populace, their legacy is almost non-existent: their humor is dated, clumsy, harks from a time when comedy was less-sophisticated.

Yet I would argue their comedy *is* cleverer than what we have now, more nuanced, less reliant on shocks and activism.

But we have to acknowledge that the impact of Dean Martin and his peers has gone. His impact was of his time; we are respecting and enjoying that legacy wholly in retrospect.

Some things will carry on...his annual Christmas ascendancy, his hits sung at parties and events.

He never wanted to be a cultural icon or musical innovator. His approach to his career was once emphasized by a well-known writer as ephemeral.



And so this is what it comes down to: the partnership of Martin and Lewis in the 21st century...

A benchmark of classic comedy? *Definitely*. Fondly recalled? *Sometimes*. Largely forgotten? *Maybe*. Relegated to the archives of comedy? *Yes*. Influential in *today's* comedy world? *No*.

Comedy is subjective; humor is personal to each of us.

But I would hope that one day, maybe soon, the duo *re-enters* the general consciousness, that they are truly remembered outside of the niche fandom that we passionately and fervently maintain.

Only then will their legacy will truly be cemented in stone: a permanence that even time and taste cannot erode.

It's *up to us* to keep the banner flying, to remind people *of* their legacy because, if we don't, Martin and Lewis will simply become another footnote in entertainment history. **DM**

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