



The Gazette

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TIM CONWAY'S Legacy OF Laughter/ Comic still makes us laugh - though he says he's too old to hear it.

The Gazette (Colorado Springs, CO)
May 2, 2003 | ROBIN A. ROTHMAN; THE GAZETTE

Forty-some years into the comedy biz, Tim Conway still believes there's no laughter like live laughter.

"The laugh track, to me, is about as annoying as you can get," he says, reflecting on the less complex days of "The Steve Allen Show," "McHale's Navy" and especially his massive 11-year run on "The Carol Burnett Show."

"When we did a show, we had a live audience, and if you didn't get a laugh you heard the air conditioner," he says. It's this same simple aesthetic upon which the 69-year-old Conway has built his current tour, now four years running, which stops at the World Arena on Thursday.

He says that, if the Burnett show was still on today, the tour would provide plenty of material for an episode. Then again, Conway insists the show never actually ended.

"We go to CBS every Friday and do the show," he says, and then, without missing a beat, "Had they been taping it they would have had another 18 years! "

Composed of several skits (all new, he says, except the dentist sketch), impressions and some stand up, the "kind of variety show" features comedian/impressionist Louise DuArt and longtime pal and professional partner, 76-year-old Harvey Korman.

"Harvey is really almost talentless," Conway confides. "I've really had to carry him for four years." He lets out a hearty laugh, then turns suddenly sincere.

"No, he's great as a performer and even in the stand-up comedy, which he had never done really in his life.

"He sort of slouches," he quickly clarifies. "I stand up. He's doing slouch comedy." Conway's trademark spontaneity is aimed as much at Korman as it is at the crowd, and it still manages to catch the straight man off-guard. His humor is deft and dry. In keeping with tradition, it's completely void of maliciousness and, he says proudly, without social value.

"We never really targeted anybody or a situation. It was really mostly about us, or we'd do takeoffs on movies and things. We didn't say we were Democrats. We didn't say we were Republicans.

"We didn't run down this guy. We didn't run down that guy. And so everybody could kind of watch.

"They can come with their families, sit down, and enjoy it " he says.

"They're not gonna be offended. Other than the fact that we're way too old for doing this." During a live show, of course, there's always the possibility of that dreaded buzz of ventilation. But Conway isn't worried. "It's nice for us because we can't hear anymore. So we don't know whether they're laughing or not."

THE DETAILS

Tim Conway and Harvey Korman, with Louise Duart

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Thursday

WHERE: The World Arena, 3185 Venetucci Blvd.

COST: \$45-\$55; 576-2626.

KORMAN: Longtime sidekick joins in the comedy.