

Kids' stuff for adults, too

Sir Jerry headlines Family Day at the art gallery



GRAHAM ROCKINGHAM

Underground hipness starts out in the strangest ways.

For Jerry Levitan, it was playing a few songs he had written for his two-year-old daughter, Jaime, to a music producer friend of his.

Before long, the mild-mannered Toronto litigation lawyer and part-time grade B actor, had morphed into Sir Jerry, a toffee-nosed Monty Pythonesque twit in top hat and tails with a rather bizarre sense of song.

Backed by his producer friend Ruben Huizenga (Glueleg, Micro Maureen), Sir Jerry cut a record in the spring of 2004 called Bees, Butterflies and Bugs.

Jaime herself came up with the title during a back-yard hunting expedition.

Next, Sir Jerry took his new persona live.

Equipped with a cast of oddball musical characters, he ventured out into public playing his silly little songs at weekend matinees at Toronto's trendy Drake Hotel on Queen Street West.

Word spread about Sir Jerry's zany act. People said it was like Sgt. Pepper teaming up with Raffi.

There were whispers about a Pink Floydish band for little people.

The Drake matinees were packed, 200 people on a Saturday afternoon. Sir Jerry helped teach the kids how to count with songs like Pick a Number.

He took them on trips around the world with Portals of Time.

Introduced them to French in songs like Oh Paree. For the parents, there was always some implied wickedness to wink at, in an Austin Powers sort of way.

Celebrity moms stopped by. Chantal Kreviazuk bought her little one a CD.

Russell Crowe reportedly took one home as well.

Some hipsters came to see Sir Jerry even if they didn't have children.

The shows got more sophisticated. Levitan hired a choreographer and dancers were added to the cast. Sometimes a magician. Jeff Rogers, a rock music agent who has represented artists such as The Crash Test Dummies and Ashley MacIsaac, signed on to represent him. He cut another record, Sir Jerry's World.

The legend continues to grow.

People are still talking about last month's Halloween party at Captain John's floating restaurant.

The fans (and their moms) were lined up along the Toronto docks waiting to get in.

Sir Jerry brought some pirate friends and a special treasure chest.

Little Jaime was there, too. She was celebrating her fifth birthday, dressed in a vampire costume.

The kids panicked for a moment



SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Sir Jerry has been called Canada's most innovative children's performer.

Showtime

What: Annual Art Gallery of Hamilton Family Day, featuring Sir Jerry

When: Sunday, 1 to 4 p.m. with Sir Jerry's performance starting at 3 p.m.

Where: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 123 King St. W.

Cost: Free

when they thought the pirates were trying to steal Sir Jerry's treasure chest, but everything worked out just fine.

Inside was a glowing sign that read "friendship."

Now, Levitan is spending a lot more time in the studio and a lot less time in the law office.

It's the way he's always wanted it — ever since he met John Lennon in 1969 during a celebrated encounter at Toronto's King Edward Hotel.

He was only 14 at the time and scored an exclusive interview.

He spoke with the Beatles superstar

about love, peace and the whole damn thing.

The interview was aired on CHUM radio and attracted worldwide attention.

He's still a Beatles fan, which accounts for some of the comparisons to Mr. Kite or the captain of the Yellow Submarine.

"I'm at a stage in my life where I've been travelling in the gutter of law for far too long," Levitan says.

"Now I've fallen into this thing, which is such a joy.

"I spend my time with artists, musicians and dancers. You couldn't have a better life."

Levitan plans to continue refining his show, with hopes of one day getting a shot on television.

On Sunday afternoon, Sir Jerry will be making his first public appearance outside of Toronto when he pays a visit to our own Art Gallery of Hamilton.

He's bringing his band, as well as Melman, his trusted manservant.

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Due to circumstances beyond our control, we do not have PlayStation 3® available for our November 17th ad.
We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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LAS VEGAS (9 p.m., NBC, Global)

Jill Hennessy and Jerry O'Connell guest star

when their Crossing Jordan characters, Jordan Cavanaugh and Woody Hoyt, come to the Montecito hot on the trail of a murderer. Meanwhile, someone robs the casino's safe-deposit vault.



NBC
Josh Duhamel plays Danny in the TV series Las Vegas.

NUMB3RS (10 p.m., CBS, Global)

Kathy Najimy joins the cast in a recurring role as Dr. Mildred French, Charlie's new boss. When a sinkhole collapses under a playground and several children are injured, Charlie tries to link the case to a corrupt construction company. Special appearance by Joshua Malina.

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TRACEY ULLMAN IN THE TRAILER TALES (10 p.m., Comedy)

The intrepid comedian returns to the small screen for this comedy special in which she reprises her role as veteran Hollywood makeup artist Ruby Romaine, one of the most memorable characters featured in Ullman's HBO series Tracey Takes On.



COMEDY NETWORK
Tracey Ullman takes on ... the trailer.