

Mostly about People

By Wally Traling



At The Front With Liberace

Interviewing Wladzio Valentino Liberace after an opening night is considered by Editor and Publisher more hazardous than covering the Viet Nam war.

I survived such an ordeal last night only because I lift weights daily and because my blood congeals quickly.

And shortly after I left the battlefield, Lou Wenzel, a publicity man, announced I had been awarded the purple heart and one battle star in the Circle Star Theater of Operation.

The fact that I shook Liberace's hand made me a marked man and three grandmothers tailed my car for 23 miles out of San Carlos, screaming for a piece of my palm for their scrapbooks.

The tall, handsome, effeminate star of the glittering arpeggio, opened last night at the Circle Star Theater for a week of restoring tired blood among his vast army of fans.

This star spangled Paderewski is now 45 and this year starts his 25th fabulous year in show business.

He filled the house and filled their hearts and afterwards



Liberace

about 100 ladies wanted to take a piece of him home.

I got to him first by tripping three grand dames.

Up close he's a handsome man ("please ma'm, I'm trying to work—your elbow's in my writing pad!"), pleasant, shy; his full head of hair is tinted purple; on his fingers are enormous rings—one shaped as a candelabra, the other as a piano.

"Are your hands insured, Mr. Liberace?"

"My whole body is insured."

"How about your style, has ("Ma'm, your pen is in my ear, I can't hear!") it changed over the years?"

Mr. Liberace said his personality has changed mostly. "I am able to kid myself instead of waiting for my critics to kid me."

He gets belly laughs announcing that all those stories about his effeminate manner he started himself.

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The showman is a hard worker; takes only Christmas off and his current average earnings, according to his manager, Seymour Heller, is \$800,000 a year.

Liberace comes from a musical family. His father played horn in the Milwaukee Philharmonic orchestra. His early piano training was classical, encouraged by the great Paderewski himself.

He has soloed with symphonies but his stage personality and a wink that can melt the purse right off mother's lips, guided him to popular acclaim.

In 1954 he played before 16,000 (13,000 were women) in Madison Square Garden, and he considers this his most thrilling concert.

He carries his own glass top piano with him ("No ma'm, I'm not through because your cane is crushing my Adams apple and I can't taaalk!!") and says there's only one other like it in the world. "And I own 'em both."

"I've met some wonnerful people. Recently I met Cassius Clay. He's really shy, y'know. He asked me if I ever fight and I told him to wear the kind of clothes I wear, I have to fight.

"I think Clay respected me, too, because I played on the black keys as well as the white ones."

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Four lady fans (Viet Cong with lacy bodices) jackknifed over my back for autographs; another crawled through my legs, and I called to Lou Wenzel for a rescue helicopter, but he was occupied administering smelling salts to a CBS cameraman who had been clubbed by a handbag.

Liberace, famous for his spangtacular costumes on stage, was now clothed in a black street suit. "If I wore my stage clothing on the street I'd be picked up for



Malio J. Stagnaro, President
By Estrella Stagnaro
Center of Municipal Wharf
Santa Cruz Beach

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● **WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT** it will be when all boats of all descriptions will appear on the bay for commercial salmon season at Santa Cruz, April 15th!

● **AUTOMOBILES AND PEDESTRIANS "BUMPER TO BUMPER"** . . . There was a true Holiday spirit on the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf over the weekend, with automobiles and pedestrians "bumper to bumper."

● **IF A BIT NIPPY, THE WEATHER** was glorious, but no one seemed to mind. They were enjoying the sights from the Santa Cruz Waterfront and breathing the clean salt air.

● **SANTA CRUZANS** . . . That local residents enjoy the Santa Cruz Wharf daily, as well as many visitors as evidenced by the local persons seen on board C. Stagnaro's deep sea fishing boats and on wharf.

● **ANGLERS and ANGLERETTES** . . . The return of these anglers and anglerettes daily are of great interest to visitors on the Wharf at C. Stagnaro's Landing, as they clamber up the stairs lugging their bags of fish. They watch the weighing-in and then the cleaning and preparing the fish as they may be taken home . . . in "Peek-a-boo" bags!

● **FREEZING DEPARTMENT** of the C. Stagnaro's Fishing Corp. is proving invaluable and the anglers all have expressed their deep appreciation for such a convenience.

● **U.C.S.C. and S.C.S.C.H.** . . . Of particular interest, Malio J. Stagnaro, as well as all employees on wharf, are always answering questions, of the many inquiries daily from visitors who want to know how to get to the branch site of the University of California, Santa Cruz, on Cowell's property and of the "Havenly and Heavenly" Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor.

● **GILDA J. STAGNARO** and Mary Stagnaro Herman, at C. Stagnaro's office on the wharf,

the secret of his rapport with the ladies.

"Well, I think I have an easy way on stage, like Belafonte and Sammy Davis, and I share part of my feelings, my personal life with them," he said.

I was about to ask him if he foresaw marriage in his future, when I spotted another Viet Cong attack assembling in a wedge formation near the door.

Wenzel saw it too and ordered the press to retreat.

"We're plumb out of plasma," he said.

SOQUEL TOWNSEND CLUB TO MEET

The Soquel Townsend club will hold its monthly potluck meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the VFW hall, 2259 Seventh avenue. The public is welcome.

Dr. C. H. Lindner, Jr.

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