

Tony Pace enjoys time 'Up on the Roof'

By ROBERT DIGIACOMO
For *At The Shore*, (800) 272-2017

For his main showroom debut at the Atlantic City Hilton Theater, entertainer Tony Pace didn't try to reinvent his act.

Instead, his "Up on the Roof" show offers all of the elements that worked in his long-running act at Resorts: Screaming Room in 2004; a little stand-up, impressions of everyone from Cher to "American Idol's" William Hung, and musical selections from his 200-plus repertoire of pop and standards.

"Up on the Roof" is an accumulation — of all the impersonations, music and things that

'Up on the Roof' Starring Tony Pace

WHERE: 9 p.m. Fridays, 8 p.m. Saturdays, 7 p.m. Sundays to Thursday, Jan. 12 to 22 and Jan. 29 to Feb. 2.

WHERE: Atlantic City Hilton Theater
HOW MUCH: Tickets are \$30 and are available at the Hilton box office or telephoned at (800) 756-1420 or www.hilton.com

I have done throughout my career and putting them into one form," Pace says.

However, unlike his last appearance here — which was so popular it was extended from 10 weeks to seven months — "Roof" has a storyline: It's about a nice Italian boy who hangs out on the roof of his New York apartment building, where he sings in the style of his favorite performers.

"This is a little more structured" than last time, says Pace, who helped develop the concept. "It has a little more of the impersonation side. I think a year-plus later, we've moved ahead as well. It's very exciting to be back. We're going to have a lot of fun with this."

For those who attended Pace's more free-wheeling performances in Resorts's Screaming Room, don't worry: Even with a script, he's tried to keep that same sense of spontaneity.

"It's still a little bit of an improv show, which I'm trying not to get rid of," Pace says. "I like the improv aspect of it. I don't want to have a show that's so slick that it becomes routine."

"I know a lot of the performance end of it. I want it very polished. The key is to keep it polished without feeling it got dull."

Having a plot also gives Pace the opportunity to show off his well-honed impressions of veteran performers like Cher, Brad Stewart and Johnny Mathis, as well as his musical versatility as he moves between show wags, contemporary

Tony Pace

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Although Pace, no doubt, has earned the equivalent of a master's in performance after so many years on the road, he still gets nervous before going on stage.

"My daughter asked me, 'Do you still get butterflies?' I told her, 'I always get butterflies. The only difference is they fly in formation now.'"

While the stakes are higher now that he's led the Screaming Room behind, Pace still sounds a confident note about his new show.

"Atlantic City in 2004 was a great launching point," he says. "It's just been a great ride ever since, and it's wonderful to be back here now."

At The Shore, The Press of Atlantic City, January 20, 2006



Photo: Photos by Tom DeRigo

Tony Pace, *smiles as the man with the voice who happens to be funny, performs a song from 'Phantom of the Opera' at the Atlantic City Hilton.*

City.

Among his numbers are Sinatra's "I Have a Love for You," Lenny's "I Love You," Josh Groban's "To Where You Are," and "Miami from 'West Side Story.'"

"The impersonations will definitely appeal to anyone from young to old — there's something for everyone," Pace says.

The same could be said for his jokes. "It's all clean — I've never sworn on stage in my life," Pace says. "People have to pay attention because the stuff goes by. I'll rewrite lyrics to some of the songs to be a little bit more on the comical side, but some of it's subtle."

The Massachusetts native brings more than 25 years of showbiz experience to Atlantic

Since the late 1970s, when he first led the band, Boston Pace, he's honed his hybrid music-comedy style at venues around the country, including several stints in Las Vegas. But underpinning his poppish style are some serious educational credentials.

Pace, who holds an associate's degree in music composition, studied piano and took courses in business at Boston University and the Berklee School of Music.

"I pretty much knew what I wanted to do music-wise," he says. "The degree itself was secondary at the time."

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Photo: Photos by Tom DeRigo

Tony Pace nails impersonations of Louis Armstrong, above, and others including Michael Jackson and Johnny Mathis.