

RUNNING HEAD: "Beauty in the Silence

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Marty Pollio: Comedian and Mime

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February 28, 2008

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For some, a picture is worth a thousand words. But for Marty Pollio, professional mime and comedian, hand motions are worth even more. The highly-qualified humorist has made people laugh for most of his life, traveling all over the world to perform.

When asked about his profession as a mime, Pollio is quick to change the term to "physical performer." Apparently, no one uses the word "mime" these days. According to Pollio, you're not cool if you do.

Son of a local racketeer, Pollio spent much of his childhood delivering "gifts" to various police officers and judges. Despite his profession, Pollio describes his father as a "good provider." However, he never got as close to his parents as he wanted to, blaming them for a lot of the hard times he went through.

Pollio started out as an electrician's apprentice, but quit in the third year of the four-year program to seek out his dream of becoming an actor. He waited tables while taking acting classes at the University of Louisville, where a professor taught him how to juggle and mime. He became a professional street performer in 1977, driving to different cities to perform for passersby and vacationers.

"This one time I even got stuck in up-state New York for a whole summer!" said Pollio. "My car broke down and I didn't have enough money to fix it, so I had to work for the summer to save money for it. Once I got it, I was on my way back to Louisville."

Pollio was extremely motivated, becoming professional in 1977. His first job was at Opryland, which doesn't even compare to his second job. He then worked at a strip club on and off for close to six years.

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Pollio had enough of his fair share of interesting experiences there. "There was a local motorcycle group who lived there, and the leader's girlfriend was one of the dancers at the club," he said. "All his friends started to come to my shows, and they even followed me around some when I traveled."

His big break came when he was asked to perform on the Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson. Pollio describes the moment as a "gotcha" for his father. When his father was in the last stages of Alzheimer's disease and couldn't remember his own wife's name, anytime the tape of Pollio's performance was played on the television, his father would point with a tear in his eye and say, "There's Marty!"

To praise him, however, would seem like a crime to the 53-year-old. "I feel like a fake with a lot of style. I'm really not anything special," he said. Most would disagree. Pollio once did a show for the troops in the Middle East, and has performed in Europe, Thailand, Paris, and Canada. He was also employed at the National Theater of the Deaf, teaching the actors and actresses there stage combat.

His acts include magic shows, stand-up comedy, and physical performing. Pollio feels that no one wants him anymore, half-heartedly blaming it on his balding head and seasoned age. He resides in Louisville and takes care of his mother, who has had several strokes and doesn't have much longer to live. "Unless my mother is still alive in seven years, I want to return to LA and get back into sitcoms," said Pollio. He is divorced and a father to one son, Daniel.

There's certainly beauty in silence for Marty Pollio, mime and comedian for all parts of the world. Without him here, it'd be an awfully noise place.