

BASILE aka VASILAKI

To all of my Greek fans here in Australia... you are truly wonderful

INTERVIEW: ANNA ARSENIS

Tell us about your family.

My father is from the Island of Andros and my mother is from Ikaria. Oh my God, Spell check just went crazy! LOL My father and mother met in the United States in 1957, married and some years later had me! I was raised on Long Island, NY and left to play American Football in college. I finished my college education then went to law school. I quit law school for I realized that it wasn't for me. When you continually confuse "Legal Torts" as "French Pastry", you got to get out of the biz! LOL Both my parents are wonderful people who did a fantastic job raising me, educating me, loving me and most importantly instilling in my life the values that I would need to succeed as good person, not only as a Greek man... but a Man! We went to church every Sunday and helped the Greek Community any way we could. I was a lousy alter boy, I kept eating the "Prosforo" behind the Alter!!!

What influenced you to get into comedy?

I kept imitating my father, the Priest, all of the people in the community... In a fun way, never nasty! And then one year, I lost my mind when I had to wear a "Foostanella". I can still hear my father telling me with his thick Greek accent, "Vre Hazo Prama... This is what the Greek soldiers wear in Greece today!" Looking deep in my father's hazel eyes, with tears running down my face, I boldly responded to him... "Dad, is it ANY wonder why Greece is not a WORLD POWER any longer!" He laughed so hard with his friends that he didn't make me wear the "Foostanel-la". As a child I knew that I had the ability, a gift if you will, to make people laugh. I never knew that gift it would take me around the world making millions of Greek happy! What a

GREAT JOB!! I'm blessed... After quitting law school it's what I wanted to do!

What elements are essential to a great comedic performance?

I have two shows that I perform, one for the general audience and one for the Greeks. For both of these shows, I maintain the same essentials for both. Know your audience, NEVER talk down to them and be entertaining. Being a proud Greek who loves our Greek culture, history and faith, I have a responsibility to my audience, children through senior citizens, to NEVER make us feel bad about being Greek. I tease myself and the hell I went through with my crazy family in a "Wide Open American Society", that people here in Australia can identify with! There are other Greek comedians who at times, I feel, talk down to the Greeks or put Greeks down, around the world. I imitate family members with funny jokes thrown in throughout the story, that everyone identifies with and then I place it all on myself getting the brunt end of the stick at all time! I do it with style, good taste, class and I keep it clean, never putting us down as a people! Our forefathers went through enough hell to get us to the place where we are today!

Who are the performers that have influenced you the most?

I love Bill Cosby, Richard Pryor and many of the throw backs from years past. Funny is funny! It's amazing that we can watch shows that are 50 years (plus) old and still laugh at the characters. Great comedy is timeless! If you can get children, their parents, grand parents and even

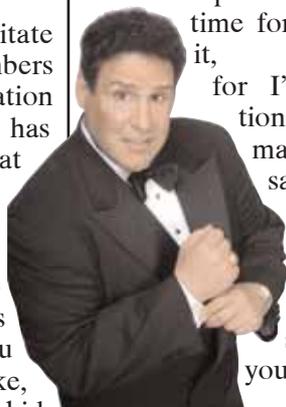


or an idea can hit me when I'm in bed. I carry a small pad and a mini recorder that I dictate notes to and have on my night stand at all times. That's the way I write.

Do you write anything other than comedy? If so, tell us about some of your other writing work.

I just finished writing a Greek comedy action movie. A producer made me an offer that he wanted me to be in a movie and if I could write it. It took me two years to finish the screen play... but it's funny!

I'm proud of it, it took time for me to write it, for I'm a perfectionist. I had to maintain the same ethics that I use for my stand up. I think it will be made very soon! I'll let you know! I



great grand parents to all laugh at the same thing, then we have a "Non-Demographic Specific show that EVERYONE can enjoy! That what makes me tick!! That's what I'm about!!

How do you flesh out your material? Do you use everyday incidents, or news items, or family stories -- or all -- to form your acts?

As I said before, to imitate all of your family members and use a situation that everyone has been involved in, at least once in their life is all you need to do. Double meaning words that made you do a double take, ideas like that. As a kid, I was smart, I would write funny stories that I witnessed and placed them in a box of notes that I still go to today!

Give us a bizarre/silly aspect of your writing process, ie, must have chocolate as you write, or do you write in your pajamas, or only while listening to a particular musician?

The funny part is that I never "get my self ready" to write material. It doesn't work like that for me! It has to hit me at the right time. I could be on a plane, in a car, cooking in my kitchen, recording in a studio

have also developed a situation comedy for CBS and we are in negotiations as we speak. It's a labor of love!

Send a message to your Australian fans

To all of my Greek fans here in Australia! I'm getting choked up here... You have adopted me as one of you own. There are no words that can express the love I have for all of you. The sold out shows and letters that I have received from children and adults have been wonderful and a true blessing. You have brought me into your homes by watching all of my DVD's and into your hearts with the love you have shown me. I am truly blessed to have fans like you and I will continue to come to my newly adopted home of Australia to share the laughs and the love! You are truly wonderful!

God bless you all!
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Basile was Paul Theodorakopoulo's guest at 2MM on Tuesday night