

Zany documentary a one-night engagement in South Lake Tahoe



‘Close But No Cigar: Bob Zany’

4 bagels out of 5

By Howie Nave

There have been many documentaries about comedians on the road, comedians who’ve performed overseas entertaining the troops, and comedians doing their act with some kind of back-story, but never have I seen a documentary about a comedian who confesses that he’s never quite “made it.”

By that I mean a household name like a Robin Williams, a Sarah Silverman or even a Seth Meyers.

Bob Zany is well known within the comedic circle and never seems to have a shortage of work when it comes to getting booked either as a stand up or getting parts in movies. But as I’ve commented on numerous times there’s no rhyme or reason getting famous in the comedy world because as much as talent plays a large part of it, there’s also a lot of luck too.

Oh sure, good management, publicists and agents help, but it’s still a crapshoot.

Consider this: Zany got his first break as a kid on “The Gong

Show" back in 1977 only to get pulled off by a man dressed as a nun. As Zany described it,

"It was horrible. I was a funny kid in high school but after 'The Gong Show', it took me 10 years of work to get an act and pull it off."



Zany's documentary chronicles not just his ups and downs throughout his career, but also others who have done quite well and have branched out as writers, actors, performers and those who have earned a good living in comedy. Interviews with more recognizable names lend their talents to Zany's documentary. Some of those include interviews with George Wallace, Carrot Top, Ralphie May, Frank Caliendo, Fred Willard, Kathleen Madigan, Judd Apatow, Bob & Tom, Rick Messina and scores of others.

A good example of the Zany dichotomy would be the time he beat out Carrot Top on "Star Search," and now Carrot Top is making a mint from his shows in Vegas, then cut away to Zany doing a one-nighter somewhere in the Midwest.

Zany has done more movies though than Carrot Top, if that's any conciliation. He appeared with Matt Damon in "The Informant!" and opposite Linda Blair in the lesser known, "Up Your Alley." His latest "23 Minutes To Sunrise" is slated for release next year and stars Eric Roberts and Nia Peeples.

Zany is also a semi-regular on the nationally syndicated "Bob and Tom Show" with "The Zany Report" (heard locally on my KRLT radio show every Tuesday morning). "Close But No Cigar: Bob Zany" is directed by Jay Kanzler who also directed Zany in "23 Minutes To Sunrise." Zany's also done a lot of work on the

small screen having appeared on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," the American Comedy Awards, "The Drew Carey Show", "Roseanne", "George Burns' Comedy Week", "Life in the Fat Lane", "Rodney Dangerfield's Really Big Show", Showtime's "Full Frontal Comedy", "Evening at the Improv", "Caroline's Comedy Hour", "Stand-Up Spotlight", "Star Search", and 17years with The Jerry Lewis Telethon for The Muscular Dystrophy Association.

"Close But No Cigar: Bob Zany" screens Oct. 9 at 6pm with Zany and director Kanzler in attendance. This is a one-time only screening.

I gave it 4 out of 5 bagels in part because I laughed and cried in several of the same scenes.

Tickets are \$25, which also includes a beverage and popcorn. Proceeds benefit The Pet Network for all those dogs and cats that need a home. The movie is 21 and over as there will be a Champagne reception following the screening at the Heavenly Village Cinema in South Lake Tahoe.

Howie Nave is host/emcee/manager of The Improv at Harveys. You can hear him Monday-Friday 6 to 10am on KRLT FM-93.9.