YOUR GUIDE TO EVERYTHING LAS VEGAS

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MAGAZINE

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Post-Pandemic Guide

Murray the Magician

Making Audiences Laugh at Both Tropicana Las Vegas and Luxor

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Photo by Gabe Ginsberg

TWICE THE DUBS

With shows at Tropicana and Luxor, **Murray Sawchuck** keeps the magic happening

By **Brock Radke**

Magician/comedian Murray Sawchuck is pulling double duty in two south Strip productions—his *Murray the Magician* headlining show at the Laugh Factory at the Tropicana Las Vegas and as the comic co-star in *Fantasy* at Luxor.

How did you prepare to return to two shows post-shutdown?

It was more jumping right in. I've been super lucky and I've had people calling me from all over the world saying it doesn't look like I've stopped (performing) at all. When something like this (pandemic) happens, you really learn how to survive.

How has your show at the Tropicana Las Vegas changed?

I've started to buy larger decks of cards so when the audience picks a card from a distance, they can still see it. I probably made seven or eight major changes to the show because I'm used to working with people in the audience, but fortunately I've built up about three hours of material, so I can use different things when we had it narrowed down to what we can do. But one thing I've noticed, that's the weirdest thing, is how I used to just say certain things during the show to the audience when you want them to work with you in a certain way. You can only rehearse that kind of thing so much, it just happens. And that first week back, I really had to change a lot of that patter.

Your room at the Trop, the Laugh Factory, has been one of the busier rooms on the Strip for entertainment. How does it feel and what's the audience reaction like?

It's been shocking, actually. I love history and I keep wondering if this is how it was when Prohibition stopped, or if this is how it was after World War I with vaudeville. Entertainment thrives after something so detrimental happens in the world. But the audiences these days really want to be here. People are coming to Las Vegas and they want to live life as full as they can. They're playing by the rules, wearing masks and distancing, and the people in the audience have been really interactive.

As the guest performer in *Fantasy*, you're taking the stage with your fiancée, Dani Elizabeth, who is the host of another Strip show, *Crazy Girls*. How does it feel to be working with Dani?

It's great. I've never been one to work with my partner in that sense ... but we started this because of the pandemic, by shooting some stuff for TV and

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(social media) in the drive-way or in the street. We had nothing else to do after coffee in the morning, so I started showing her my tricks and we had a good time with that. And then when I got the call to go back to *Fantasy*, they wanted to bring in the bigger (illusions) because it's such a big stage (at Luxor Theater) and ... so we started practicing for real on a proper stage. She picked it up super quick and it's kind of fun.

And I'm sure it's great to add another element to that show, since it must be challenging to take something built for a 350-seat theater and perform in an 1,800-seat room.

If you have 100 people in a small comedy club, you can destroy. But in that 1,800-seat theater all spread out, it's almost like everyone's watching their own individual show and they react individually. If you and I go to a show and take a couple friends, when one of us laughs, everyone else in our group is going to chuckle, too. It's magnetic. When you're onstage, you're farther away from those reactions, and it's interesting to see how it can still spread across the room when groups are (distanced).

▶ **Laugh Factory at Tropicana Las Vegas**
800.829.9034
***Fantasy* at Luxor**
18+, 702.262.4400

Murray Sawchuck courtesy photo by Ethan Miller, Fantasy *photo by Gabe Ginsberg*