

PHILADELPHIA STYLE

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Play It Again, Eddie

Entertainer Eddie Bruce has performed at thousands of weddings throughout his career, a journey that has also included regular spots on *The Al Alberts Showcase* and a hosting gig on the '80s hit *Dancin' on Air*. In between performances and rehearsals, he reminisced with us about life on stage. INTERVIEW BY KRISTIN DETTERLINE-MUNRO



ON THE SPARK THAT STARTED IT ALL

I saw Ella Fitzgerald when I was six years old. It was at the Latin Casino [in Cherry Hill, New Jersey]. It was my birthday and we went to see The Three Stooges, who were playing the same night. Just as we were getting ready to leave, Ella came on stage. That was when I knew that I wanted to be a singer.

ON HOMETOWN APPEARANCES

Philadelphia parties like no one else does. Maybe it's because I'm from here, but I've noticed there's an intensity of energy that's almost nonstop. Once everyone is up and dancing you've got to maintain the mood. We typically get asked to play Top 40 or classic rock with a little R&B and some disco tunes. It's so much fun. Get a crowd going in Philly and there's nothing like it.

ON OUTLETS AND INSPIRATION

I've been performing for 33 years, but after two decades of playing party

music I needed an outlet. That was when I started the Eddie Bruce Cabaret. It's more intimate. I perform a lot of Tony Bennett—he's the keeper of the flame for the Great American Songbook and was the inspiration for my latest CD, *Bruce on Bennett: A Loving Tribute to an American Musical Treasure*. I just met him for the first time recently and handed him a copy. It was surreal.

ON WEDDINGS

Honestly, most weddings tend to be a blur. But the most fulfilling aspect is when the reception is over and the bride throws her arms around you and says it was just like she dreamed. Or when you've played six or seven different parties for the same family and watch the kids grow up. On the flip side, I've also heard the most bizarre wedding toasts. You wouldn't believe the horrible, inappropriate things that people say. I should have written them all down. It would have made for a good book.

For his performance schedule or to book Bruce for your event, visit eddiebruce.com.