

Naples Sun Times - Growing up Brady at TheatreZone

By Arlene Colcombe 01/04/2006

It was a "very Brady" holiday at TheatreZone, when Barry Williams, better known as Greg Brady of The Brady Bunch, performed a nostalgic review of the old TV show titled, "Growing Up Brady" in the G&L Theatre at the Community School of Naples. Using film clips, pictures and personal antidotes, he made his audience laugh and sigh while remembering and re-enjoying moments from The Brady Bunch TV show. Williams began his show with a fun rap song, which merrily spoofed himself and the old show that eventually typecast him forever. The number was I'm the real Brady/I got AKAs up the wazoo. In reality, Barry, aka Greg, has done much more than just The Brady Bunch show. Following the end of the series, he starred in Bob Fosse's production of Pippin on Broadway, and dozens more through the years including The Music Man and Guys and Dolls. And of course there were The Brady Bunch specials and movies, Very Brady Christmas and The Brady Brides, among others. Williams then wrote a book about some of his unique experiences, called Growing Up Brady/I Was a Teenage Greg, which sold more than 300,000 copies, and aired as a television movie for NBC. Making appearances on a variety of television series, such as Celebrity Boot Camp and Fear Factor has kept Williams active in television as well a role in the Paramount film, Dickie Roberts. Currently Williams is a host on Sirius Satellite Radio Totally Seventies, which airs for four hours a day, six days a week, featuring the best 70s music and authentic 70s talk. With a lot of interaction from his audience, Williams talked about his Brady Bunch years and experiences. He admitted his youthful crush on Florence Henderson, who was married and had four kids at that time. He thought "Marsha" was a "babe" when he met her, although she was only 12 at the time, and millions of teenage boys would have agreed with him. He shared his fondness for John Reitz, who played the Brady Dad, and died from cancer in 1992. In an effort to demonstrate how the choreographed dances were staged in the Brady productions, Williams invited several audience members onto the stage for lessons. He explained how the dance routines had to be gauged at the lowest level of ability of all of the Brady's, and so that kept things pretty simple. It seems that "Peter Brady" actually had several left feet. The resulting Brady booty shaking only consisted of three steps and some swaying. He related how, when singing was required during The Brady Bunch show, some of the actor's microphones would be turned off; the easy method for fixing the voice problem. Williams, however, can sing, and he entertained his audience with a few songs. Radio, TV, Broadway and author not being enough, Williams has released a CD titled The Return of Johnny Bravo. The songs he chose for the CD were those that had some meaning for him, and all were "sunshine songs." Williams gave the audience a chance to ask him any of those burning questions that kept a fan on edge for years. Yes, they all got along. Yes, he dated Marsha. He disliked the sparkly polyester outfits. He enjoyed doing the Very Brady Christmas show, and it was very successful; the highest rated show on three networks for that year. By the time the show was cancelled, Williams felt like he was ready to move on. At the end, Williams sang and walked through the audience, pausing several times to sit next someone and have a Polaroid taken, which he immediately handed to that audience member as a keepsake. A champagne reception immediately following the show gave all the opportunity to meet Barry Williams, and he was extremely receptive and easy to talk to. Each invitee got the opportunity to have their picture taken with Williams, which was later mailed to them. Williams is presently a 50-something father of a 3-year-old boy, living in Los Angeles. He primarily sees himself as an actor and singer, although his accomplishments include so many other activities. "Life has been very consistent for me," he explained. "Growing Up Brady" was the first show presented by TheatreZone at the Community School. TheatreZone is a not-for-profit corporation, which aims to bring to Naples professional productions of plays and musicals, as well as present productions of new works. In March 2006, TheatreZone will present Mack & Mabel, starring Gary Sandy of WKRP in Cincinnati fame.