

The Little Theatre
ON THE SQUARE
Sullivan, Illinois

Presents



RED SKELTON

A PERFORMANCE TRIBUTE BY

TOM MULLICA



February 24-27 & March 3-6, 2005



Illinois
ARTS
Council
AN AGENCY OF
THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

This program is
partially sponsored
by a grant from the
Illinois Arts Council

Member

n | a | m | t
NATIONAL ALLIANCE
for MUSICAL THEATRE

MEMBER: ILLINOIS THEATRE ASSOCIATION



RED SKELTON

A PERFORMANCE TRIBUTE BY TOM MULLICA

Tom Mullica's love affair with show business began in 1953 in Waupun, Wisconsin when, as a five-year-old child, he decided to be a clown. Two years later he discovered magic and not long after combined the two. In addition to magic and clowning, he is a highly skilled ventriloquist and pantomimist.

Tom enlisted in the Army at age 18 and after 3 years in Korea and Germany moved to the magic capital of the world, Colon, Michigan, where he built illusions and demonstrated magic for the famous Abbot's Magic Company. Tom then moved to Atlanta, Georgia where he attended bartending school and opened his own nightclub called *The Tom-foolery Magic Bar Theatre*. His popularity in Atlanta led to an appearance on *Late Night with David Letterman*, *World's Greatest Magic*, *Penn & Teller*, *Viva Variety* and hundreds of television appearances throughout the world. With countless hotel and casino performances in Atlantic City and Las Vegas, Tom Mullica remains one of the greatest variety acts of our time. Between 1976 and 1987, the *Tom-foolery* was visited by countless notables – including a long time favorite of Tom's...Red Skelton.

Red visited the *Tom-foolery* in 1980 and liked the show so much he spent two hours with Tom afterwards. Tom occasionally included some suggestive material in his comedy routines at the time and Red proclaimed, "I'll tell you what Tom, if you clean up your act, you can use my material." He told Tom that his humor was too suggestive and that it shocked people into laughing. He instructed Tom to do every show as if his mother, a priest and a nun were in the audience. Tom's approach to comedy changed that very night. One of the dominant factors in Tom's life has been the quiet, sincere friendship he developed with Red Skelton over the years that followed. Never a night went by at the *Tom-foolery* that Tom didn't mention Red. This friendship took on an even more significant, poignant turn for Tom when Skelton sent him W.C. Fields' famous twisted pool cue.

(continued to next page)

(continued from previous page)

Fields used the twisted pool cue in a classic vaudeville routine with Ed Wynn eliciting laughs under the pool table. Finally, Fields “discovered” Wynn under the table and walloped him with the cue. Fields had taken a liking to Red Skelton and had given him the cue about a year before he died. Tom feels he can never achieve a higher tribute than that in Red’s note which accompanied the pool cue...”I don’t know of anyone I would rather pass it on to for safekeeping than you!”

After eleven years performing at the *Tom-foolery*, Tom wanted to move on. He asked Red for his advice and Red suggested, “Take 10-15 minutes of your best material and perform it pantomime to music and you’ll be able to work any place in the world...you’ll have no language barrier.” Tom took Red’s advice and after six months of rehearsal moved to Paris, France where he was one of the featured acts at the world famous Crazy Horse Saloon.

Tom returned to America in 1991 and continued his comedy magic act until 1996 when he began writing “*RED SKELTON: A Performance Tribute*”. In the fall of 1998 he contacted Leonard Anderson, Executive Director of The Little Theatre On The Square and said that he had a show about Red Skelton that he would like to start performing in theaters. Anderson agreed to give him a five performance run of the show in March of 1999 and it was so popular with the audiences that he brought Tom back in October of 1999 for a ten performance run and again in October of 2001 for a ten performance run. Tom has since performed the show in theaters throughout America and Canada and has a standing engagement in Branson, Missouri from April through December each year.

The Little Theatre On The Square is proud to have helped Tom Mullica launch his current career success with **RED SKELTON: A Performance Tribute by Tom Mullica.**



**NAMED A PARTNER IN EXCELLENCE
BY THE ILLINOIS ARTS COUNCIL**

The Little Theatre
ON THE SQUARE
Sullivan, Illinois

2005
Summer
Season



42nd Street
June 8 - 19



Swing!
June 22-July 3



Disney's
Beauty and the Beast
July 6 -17



Fiddler On The Roof
July 20-31

**JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING
TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT**
AUGUST 3-14

THEATRE for YOUNG AUDIENCES

**SLEEPING
BEAUTY**

**Jack & The
Beanstalk**

**JUNGLE
BOOK**