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## **Dean and Jerry ... What Might Have Been — A review by Marilyn de Lang**

Just after the war ended in the mid-1940s, two young men were trying to make their mark in show biz. Joseph Levitch was a comic who lip-synched to records, while singer Dino Paul Crocetti worked the nightclub circuit. Serendipity brought them together during concurrent bookings in the Catskills; and, on July 25, 1946, Joseph and Dino—better known as Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin—teamed up as a duo act at Atlantic City's 500 Club.

*Dean and Jerry ... What Might Have Been* sheds light on a more innocent time, when the unlikely pairing of a vaudevillian and a crooner charmed a war-weary audience craving light entertainment. Their shtick clicked, and they soon achieved top billing on radio and TV, in films and clubs, with frequent appearances on NBC's popular *Colgate Comedy Hour*.

But, eventually, egos intruded and their harmony became increasingly dissonant. On July 24, 1956, precisely ten years after their debut, they performed together for the final time. And they didn't speak to each other again for over two decades.

The actors in Orillia's studio theatre echo the same camaraderie and delight in each other's talent of the early days of Martin and Lewis. With a deep appreciation for the American Pop Standards, Derek Marshall has been singing for over 20 years in jazz and blues clubs, casinos and symphony halls throughout North America and Europe. A devotee of Frank Sinatra and his infamous Rat Pack, he gravitated naturally to the distinctive style of Dean Martin. Nicholas Arnold, like the character he portrays, is a true comic genius. A longtime fan of Jerry Lewis films, he first adopted his identity for his Grade 8 talent show, and later toured a solo tribute to the man he profoundly respects.

Marshall and Arnold do the routines and croon the tunes, sliding easily between their own personalities and those of their alter egos. And they also reveal the truth behind and beyond the triumphant but troubled relationship.

"So often, the breakup of a partnership means the end of a career," said Marshall. "But in this case, it propelled them onto greater success." Arnold added, "Their timing was actually impeccable ... they began when people needed some simple fun, and they split up while they were still on top."

After the act dissolved, Lewis had a Number 1 hit song, in addition to his lucrative film roles. As Arnold noted, he was a man who reinvented himself over and over again, from his zany Nutty Professor role to hosting the annual Muscular Dystrophy Telethon for over 40 years. Martin launched his own TV show, followed by the legendary Celebrity Roasts. His many movies included a major role in *The Young Lions*, co-starring Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift.

With vintage photos and clips, and the authentic sounds of the era beautifully executed by the onstage band, Marshall and Arnold draw us in to the world of Martin and Lewis with heartwarming intimacy. Their buoyant energy is absolutely infectious, and we are given the special opportunity to slip back in time and revel in the sheer joy of Dean and Jerry in their heyday.

*'Dean and Jerry ... What Might Have Been'* is playing in the studio theatre of the Orillia Opera House until August 5. For tickets or information, please visit [www.OrilliaOperaHouse.ca](http://www.OrilliaOperaHouse.ca) or call the Box Office at 705-326-8011 or 1-888-ORILLIA.