



## WHO'S THAT GIRL?

By Renee Libutti

**I**t was every reporter's dream — a chance to interview one of the entertainment industry's greatest stars. I got to talk to the "Material Girl," and I didn't have to hide in any bushes or pay off any security guards to do it. Okay, okay ... I'm lying. I didn't really get to interview Madonna — but I did get to interview the next best thing. I met her alter ego Coty Alexander, who appears as Madonna in "American Superstars" at the Stratosphere.

I didn't waste any time when I met her. "What's it like to be Madonna?" I fired away.

"I never thought I would be Madonna. She's awesome when you think about it," said Alexander. "Most people don't realize how long she's been around. Her first album came out in 1986, which was almost 11 years ago."

Alexander, on the other hand, has only been re-creating the popular singing sensation for the past six months. While dancing in a show at Caesars Palace in Tahoe, she caught the eye of Mark Callas, the executive producer of "American Superstars." He knew she was a singer and saw that she could dance. Something inside told him Alexander had "blonde ambition."

"The producers have an eye for talent here and they tend to give people a chance," she explained. "If they think they can work with someone, they usually end up making them great."

Indeed it took a lot of hard work before this Madonna-wannabe was ready to appear in front of audiences. Alexander immersed herself in Madonna's music, concert videos and movies. Simulating the star's remarkable voice proved to be her first difficult task.

Alexander's voice is naturally high — a lot like Madonna's voice was when she first burst onto the music scene in the '80s. Alexander had to work diligently on training her vocal muscles to reach lower notes for numbers such as "Express Yourself" and "Vogue."

"Acting like her is probably my biggest challenge," she added, "because the me inside naturally wants to jump out."

Alexander admitted her personality is a little more shy and reserved than Madonna's alluring onstage presence. Fortunately, she enjoys wearing the sexy bustier-style leotards that the producers helped her design. On average, it takes Alexander about an hour each night to dress, do her hair and put her makeup on.

"People often tell me they saw Madonna performing live and that I'm doing a great job," said Alexander. "I really

take that as a compliment."

I, too, was very impressed. From the music to the costumes to the choreography, Alexander really knows how to "get into the groove." It is an admirable feat considering Madonna is such a chameleon with her appearance and her style of music.

"I admire the way she constantly is able to reinvent herself. Who knows if that's for the public or if it's for herself," said Alexander. "Madonna shows people they shouldn't be afraid to be who they are."

"American Superstars" plays nightly (dark Thursdays) in the Stratosphere's Broadway Showroom at 7 and 10 p.m. Tickets are \$22.95 for adults and \$16.95 for children ages 5-12. For more information, call 702-380-7711.