

WITHOUT A CAUSE. I enjoyed speaking with him because he was so passionate about the script that he sort of became the villain he was talking about the villain (of the story), "I get this feeling about this guy." -he was really into him & the whole time he was talking, I thought, "God, he's gotta play the part." I had a talk with Chris McQuarrie (writer of THE USUAL SUSPECTS) who liked the script, and said, "I think Stewart should play Professor Hess," and Chris laughed & said, "That's perfect. He is Professor Hess."

It was strange for me to be up there because I'm used to living the life I'm living now, where I'm always in a city & always dealing with chaos. Also, I live in a vacuum with my work & nobody knows the characters in this script. Next thing I know, I'm on this hill on this mountain with these wonderful people, all of whom know everything about the characters in this film - they're talking about them as if

they're actually realized. And the nice thing about that was, it brought a bit of closure to one process of this film, which has taken me 3 years to write and storyboard. I see it as, "Oh God, this film's never gonna be done, "but being around people where writing a script is actually accomplishing something that in itself is its own end, was fantastic.

The entire time I grew up, I was always drawing - I studied drawing & painting a little bit when I just got



out of high school. They all kind of developed at the same time, even the writing. That too, is something I used to do as a child to amuse my friends. The writing is pretty much the

cruX of the music, the film work - pretty much the cruX of everything.

It's a nice time now. I've sort of been a hermit for the past 3 years, writing. We didn't do a show for about a year and 1/2, then we did a show last December when we finished recording & sold the place out. I thought everyone would forget us...

*Well, you're very popular... anything else in the works for you?*

#### Upcoming Projects

I wrote a collection of short stories that I was going to do illustrations for... there's another book that a friend & I were working on together - he's illustrating some and a couple other people are doing some - that's going on and could take another couple of years; it's nothing that we're really in a hurry to finish.

I'm starting to think about doing the short stories as a spoken word CD called THE MAN

WHO WOULD PONTIFICATE. I'd want to record it here at the Hotel Utah because we don't play here very much - from time to time, we'll do something unannounced here & it's always fun. I think doing something like that here & recording in a studio as well, mixing & melding, and adding a bit of musical accompaniment would be a nice collection. There's one story, 'The Famous Fart' which is about this fart that ends up going to Heaven & this big turmoil happens because among the souls & angels, there's this other ethereal creature... we've played it a couple of times live - it's mainly a-cappella and you'd never put anything like that on a [music] CD, 'cause it'd end up in the Comedy section - but as a spoken word piece among other spoken word pieces, it's very powerful and stirring. I'm thinking I'd maybe still do illustrations [for the stories] and have them in the packaging. So one of those books may end up as a CD.

*Speaking in terms of the writing, everything seem very conceptual, with the various gallery of characters.*

THE KETCHUP AND MUSTARD MAN was like a collage of doomed cartoons - the story of a guy trying to tell 'the story of a little princess' & going off in these different areas. This one, THE VILLAIN THAT LOVE BUILT, has that kind of character feel to it, but things have gotten a lot more... bitter. THE AMERICAN ASTRO-NAUT as well. Something I really loved about how people saw it, is - it's a musical, it's very funny, but nobody focused on that. Everyone focused on the tragedy, which I thought was refreshing. Most people, they'll see something I do & "It's funny!" , and I'll go, "Yeah, well..."

*Bitterness & dark humor being a rare thing in THE BILLYNAYER SHOW... (yen. an ironic statement - ed.)*

Well, it's the kind of

bitterness where you finally just open up and say these terrible things and people just chuckle and relate.

THE VILLAIN THAT LOVE BUILT is the same way - there's a lot of kindness in it, but -- it's been a rough couple of years.

Something that's changed... the way I used to be onstage was a lot more young & big & youthful - now it's a lot more pinched and bitter. So things are evolving a bit. Even though I say things are a lot darker, the audience still smiles throughout the show. That's the important thing.



Cory McAbee in the Hotel Utah, 1998