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Comedian Mark DeMayo

Interview for *Contacto Latino* by Cynthia Via

At a recent comedy event, *Contacto Latino* sat down with New York comedians Ricky Velez and Mark DeMayo.

On that particular night, the 22-year-old, Velez was hosting, A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas Latino Laughter in NY's Broadway Comedy Club with five other Latin comedians.

The show celebrated the release of Warner Bros.'s holiday movie with monologues from the likes of Mark DeMayo, Kyle Senor-Ocasio, Ricky Velez, Jesus Chavez, Sergio Chicon and Kenny Ortega.

Velez showed a youthful energy getting the crowd amped for a night of funny anecdotes.

Born and raised in Jamaica, Queens, Velez comes from a mixed background. Puerto Rican, Irish and English are all brewing within this comedian, who started doing comedy at 17.

"I was raised in Queens. I grew up very close to my Spanish side and I also grew up close to my other side," he said.

His comedy style is based on real life experiences as opposed to fiction and his routines have a blend of college, dating and family stories. "My comedy is about me growing up [and] the way I view things."

Unlike his comedy elders, all through high school he was influenced not by the classic Richard Pryor or George Carlin, but by Mike DeStefano, from the Bronx and Dave Chappelle, who he met this year.

"I grew up on that," he says, ecstatically.

Now on his 6th year, Velez plans to continue traveling and dedicating himself full-heartedly to comedy. Last month he was on the road every weekend and he was living in L.A. until he decided to head back to NY four months ago.

"I want to do stand-up for the rest of my life," he says. "I like the live audience; it's more of an instant gratification."

When he reaches the age of 25, Velez sees himself doing a *Comedy Central Presents*, but at this time he's busy basking in his passion. "At night I get to come out and do this, which is great: you meet so many people, and I love everything I do, every day."



Video: Ricky Velez stand-up routine by Comedy Time

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Another NY native, Mark DeMayo, brings an autobiographical approach, baring many truths with some exaggerations, and an all-around refreshing take on pop culture, while staying away from racial jokes. "It's not positive energy," he explains.

Instead, DeMayo captures the "whole NY vibe."

"Even though I'm Dominican, I grew up with a lot of Greeks, Italians, other Latinos and Blacks."

DeMayo remembers life in NY as a teen and never really fitting in. "I grew in Astoria when it was all Greeks so I was the only Spanish kid," he says.

This some times boisterous comedian has a real presence on stage and confesses to being "fascinated with women." His monologues are filled with personal anecdotes about his marriage and female encounters over the years.

When asked why Warner Bros.'s decided on having a Latin night, DeMayo comically responded, "Harold and Kumar are diverse, one is Indian and one is Asian so I guess if you mix Indian and Asian, you get Dominican somehow."

DeMayo has been in comedy for 15 years, but also keeps a regular day job; though soon he plans to dedicate himself fully to comedy. "At some point you have to make a choice and go for yours," he says.

Visit Mark DeMayo's page.

Check out Ricky Velez.

Thanks to our friends at Arenas Group Entertainment for the special invitation!