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Returning to the Stage, Steve Martin Shares His Journey Back to Stand-up Comedy and Happiness in the June/July AARP The Magazine

WASHINGTON, DC—America’s beloved comedic legend is BACK! Steve Martin is looking great and making people laugh more than ever as he makes his triumphant return to the comedy stage. In an exclusive interview with *AARP The Magazine (ATM)*, the banjo-playing, novel-writing star, now 71, opens up about his return to stand-up comedy after a decades-long hiatus. A master at reinvention, Martin shares his cyclical path from comedian to impresario to his current touring comedy show *An Evening You Will Forget for the Rest of Your Life* with his longtime friend, Martin Short.

While lauded as a comedy genius and ranked among history’s greatest stand-up comedians, Steve Martin shares his personal anguish while building his career and how his new perspective on life has brought him back to his roots. Martin also discusses how he suffered from panic attacks and hypochondria, his difficult relationship with his father, and his thoughts on raising a child at 71 years of age.

The following are excerpts from the June/July issue of the *ATM* cover story featuring Steve Martin, available in homes starting June 1st and available online now at www.aarp.org/magazine/.

Selections from Steve Martin’s Cover Story in the June/July issue of AARP The Magazine

On his perspective of his life now:

Asked to describe his life now, Martin does not hesitate: “very, very happy. I mean, it’s actually the perfect shape of a life. Except for the hard parts in the beginning – the disharmony, panic, pain, with occasional moments of great affection and comedy success.”

He says it took him a while to figure out that fame doesn’t make you successful. Not as a human being, not in any real way. Since that lesson, he says, “it’s been a gentle up-hill slope to a real, real happiness.”

On performing with his friend Martin Short:

Crowds love not only the nostalgic jokes and characters but the new, sometimes improvised material that Martin and Short bring to the stage. It’s the first time in all these years, Martin says, that he has truly loved performing. He and his old friend have an understanding:

“We have very similar boundaries with each other, which are none.”

On performing in the clubs:

Performing was always stressful, he recalls. The memory of his stand-up days makes Martin cringe: “I was in clubs. And they’re seedy, and there’s cheap wine and talking and noise.”

On his biggest fear when he was younger:

Also, in his youth, he suffered from panic attacks and hypochondria. But in recent years, those feelings stopped. As he jokingly puts it, “I worried all these years that I was going to die, and I never did. So why waste all that worry?”

On becoming wiser with age:

Many of us become more anxious as we age. Martin has gone in the other direction. “And you know, you absolutely do become wiser – if you’re watching and listening,” he adds.



Steve Martin on the Cover of AARP The Magazine June-July Issue

On his ascent to success:

Martin says his success came not from innate talent but from dogged effort, honing his material night after night. "I always divide the world up into people like Picasso or Oscar Wilde, who seemed to have been born with their gifts, and the rest of us, who work at what we do," he says. "For me, it wasn't a gift. It was working."

On becoming a father:

Martin and [Anne] Stringfield married in 2007 and now have a 4-year-old daughter. Having a young child at 71 is "fantastic," Martin says. "I think if I'd had a child earlier, I would have been a lousy father, because I would have misplaced my attention on my career."

He is determined not to make the same mistakes his own father did, although the squishy language of parental love doesn't come easily. "I am very forthcoming with her, and it's great," he says carefully. "She's giving me way more than I'm giving her."

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About AARP The Magazine

With more than 37 million readers, AARP The Magazine is the nation's largest circulation magazine - and the definitive lifestyle publication - for Americans 50 and older. AARP The Magazine delivers targeted content in three demographic versions - for readers age 50 to 59, 60 to 69 and 70-plus - including health and fitness features, financial guidance, consumer information and tips, celebrity interviews, and book and movie reviews. AARP has been publishing a magazine for members since its founding in 1958. AARP The Magazine is published bimonthly in print and continually online. Learn more at www.aarp.org/magazine/.

About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into 'Real Possibilities' by changing the way America defines aging. With staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and promote the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare security, financial security and personal fulfillment. AARP also advocates for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the world's largest circulation magazine, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @aarp and our CEO @JoAnn_Jenkins on Twitter.

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