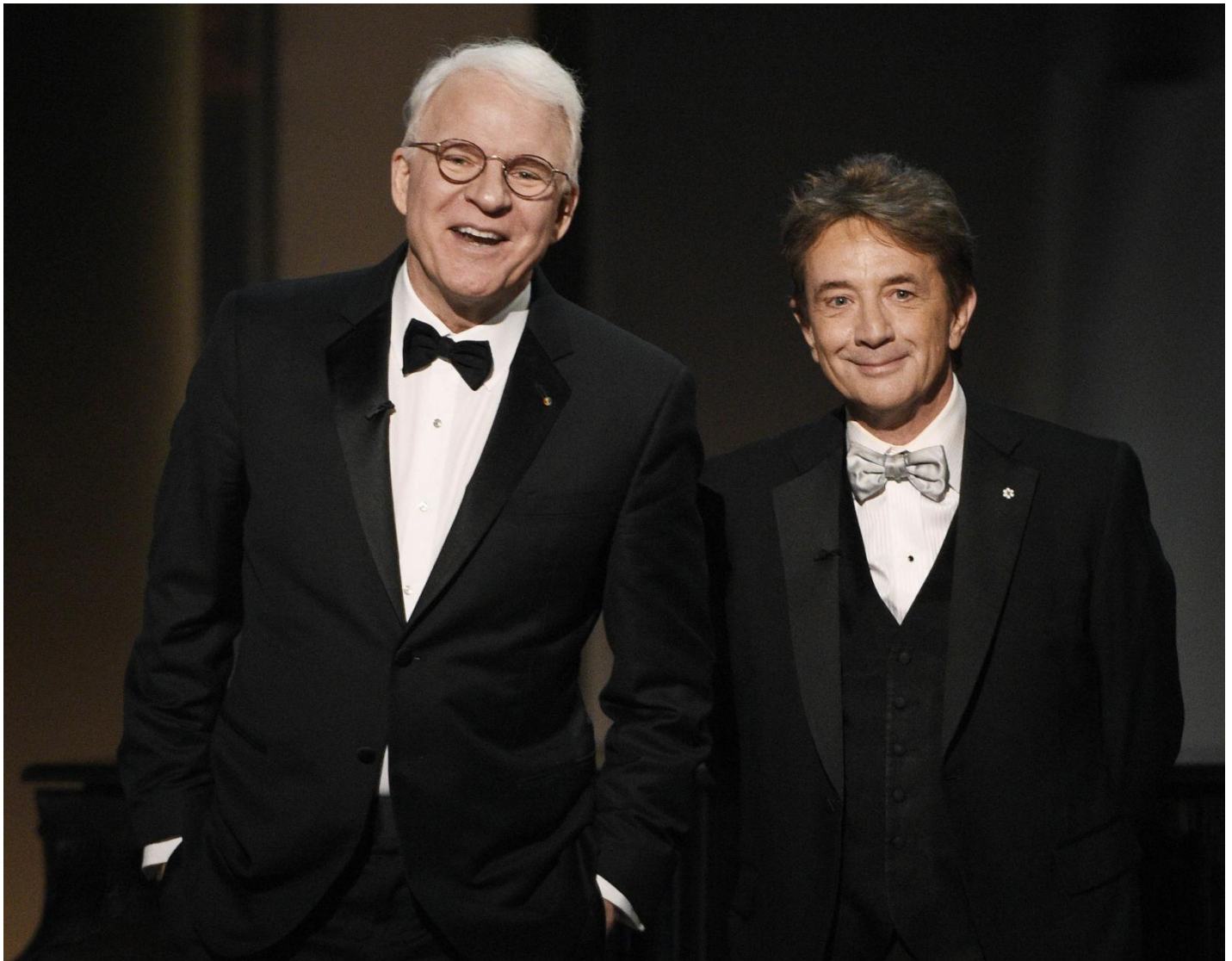


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Marshall Artists Series presents Steve Martin, Martin Short at the Keith-Albee on Saturday

By LINDSEY BAHR The Associated Press
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FILE - In this June 8, 2017 file photo, Steve Martin, left, and Martin Short appear at the 45th AFI Life Achievement Award Tribute to Diane Keaton in Los Angeles. Longtime friends Steve Martin and Martin Short are hitting the road again in 2019 with a new show called "Now You See Them, Soon You Won't." (Photo by Chris Pizzello/Invision/AP, File)

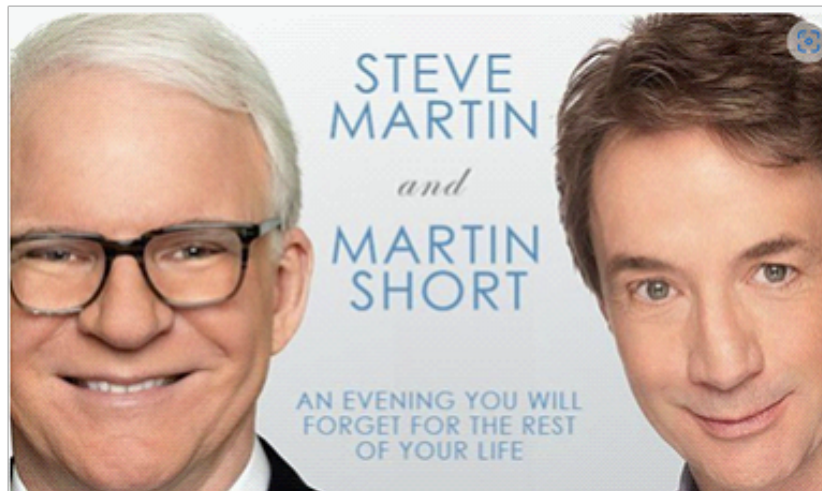
Chris Pizzello

LOS ANGELES - Steve Martin and Martin Short are back on the road again for their new tour "Now You See Them, Soon You Won't."

The two comedy legends spoke to The Associated Press about the tour, which kicked off its 2019 leg on Jan. 12 in Atlanta, their friendship and when they knew that roasting each other was OK.

The Marshall Artists Series brings the two veteran comedians by the historic Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 9. The show is sold out.

Although Steve Martin has not played the market in a few years, Martin Short played the Clay Center in 2015 and the Marshall Artists Series in February 2008 when he brought his one-man show in complete with a seven-piece band, some special guests such as Jiminy Glick hidden away in the makeup room, and more than a few funny stories and songs.



Their remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

AP: Is "now you see them, soon you won't" mostly new material?

MARTIN: A lot of it is. It's very hard for us to judge what is new because a lot of it is new but it's in the same framework. What we tried to do is salvage or keep what we suspected the audience wanted to see again, but we try to replace lines and do it a little different. But if somebody saw the show, they'd say 'that's mostly a new show!'

AP: What is your process for determining what to cut and add?

MARTIN: It's really tri ... well, I should let Marty talk.

SHORT: Go ahead, Steve, I'm just doing something else.

MARTIN: OK. It's trial and error. We work with writers, we work on our own and we put things in, we take things out, and every night after the show we walk off stage and we go, 'What should we do, how should we fix that, should we move that line up to the front?'

AP: Do you allow for spontaneous moments?

SHORT: You absolutely allow. What a set show gives you is the confidence to go out because you know you're prepared, and you have lots of great material, but then you go out there and you're so loose that other things happen and sometimes they're the most delightful.

MARTIN: You are fantastic. I'm going to let you speak all the time now because you just nailed that beautifully.

SHORT: I did. And remember that the difference between my voice and yours is that with one voice you have this kind of groan.

AP: I do always worry that somehow the voices will blend when you go to transcribe.

SHORT: They won't. One won't even come out.



MARTIN: Well, let's put it this way, you'll be able to tell which mine is because I speak grammatically.

SHORT: But, for some odd reason, you'll find yourself dozing off for no reason and you'll realize the connection.

AP: Do you use one another as a test audience?

MARTIN: Well, I think each other is our first test audience. And then I tend to just try out material on my wife and on my dog and on the band. And finally on the audience, who, of course, has the ultimate say. When I first started out people would say, 'You have a great sense of humor.' And I would say, really, the audience has the great sense of humor.

AP: When did you figure it was OK to roast each other like this?

MARTIN: Day one.

SHORT: It's very natural for people in comedy to do it. I think it's very natural for friends, close friends to do it. And we probably started doing it playing Scrabble in the trailer while making 'Three Amigos.'

MARTIN: The first day we met, Marty zinged me. He came to my house to pick up the script to 'Three Amigos' and he saw all of the paintings and he said, 'How did you get this rich? I've seen the work.'

Short: And I was looking for the script for 'Three Amigos' and Steve handed it to me and said, 'Can you give this to Martin Short, please?'

AP: You said the previous tour was not a nostalgia tour. Is that still true and why was that important to specify?

Short: Well, because it wasn't a nostalgia tour. A nostalgia tour would be if I came out as Ed Grimley and we did the 'Wheel of Fortune' sketch and hope that that would get some nostalgia applause. If a singer comes out and sings all old hits, then that is a nostalgia tour - and there's nothing wrong with that and that's great and that's what I'd rather see.

MARTIN: I think a nostalgia tour implies that you'll come out and say, 'You know, ladies and gentlemen, when I first started, I did a little movie called "The Jerk."' And then you stand there and wait for applause.

SHORT: And I'd love that show.

AP: Will there still be singing and banjo playing in this go-around?

MARTIN: Absolutely. We describe the show as a lot of comedy and a little bit of music.

AP: It is incredible that singing and the banjo are 'side talents' for you two.

Martin: You know, Marty would never do this, but he could make a serious album and I would listen to it all the time. I find his voice so beautiful. Pitch perfect. Beautiful tone. He sings 'Send in the Clowns' in the show and it's just gorgeous.

Short: Well, thank you. And I of course have all Steve's albums and I one day plan to listen to them.

AP: Was there a moment when you realized this was more than a showbiz friendship?

MARTIN: Yeah, I would say very early on. We persevered. When you finish doing a movie, mostly everyone drifts away from each other. We just went and had dinners and saw each other.

SHORT: I think you make that choice. You have to be conscientious and say, you know what? I don't want to lose that person.

MARTIN: We also ended up vacationing together with our families. Two weeks on an island, you'll know if you like that person or not, you know? I'm talking about our wives.

AP: Is there anything else you want people to know about the show?

MARTIN: Our goal, and sometimes we achieve it, I think, maybe I'm a little arrogant, but we want it to be one of the best shows the audience ever saw. We want to give the audience their money's worth and really make them laugh and make them really have a good time and leave that theater feeling better than they did when they came in.

SHORT: Totally agree. And you don't always achieve it, but it's awfully fun to have a goal.

MARTIN: How could I possibly achieve it with you next to me?

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Don't Threaten. Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated.

Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.

Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

Be Proactive. Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.

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