

Lily Tomlin comes to Greenville's Peace Center

Comic actress shares her thoughts on her career, her partner Jane

by David Moore . Q-Notes staff

Lily Tomlin, one of America's foremost comedienne, continues to venture across an ever-widening range of media, starring in television, theater, motion pictures, animation, and video. Throughout her extraordinary entertainment career, Tomlin has received numerous awards, including: six Emmys; a Tony for her one woman Broadway show, "Appearing Nately;" a second Tony as Best Actress, Drama Desk Award and Outer Critics' Circle Award for her one woman performance in Jane Wagner's "The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe;" a CableAce Award for Executive Producing the film adaptation of "The Search;" a Grammy for her comedy album, "This is a Recording," as well as nominations for her subsequent albums "Modern Scream," "And That's the Truth" and "On Stage;" and two Peabody Awards — the first for the ABC television special, "Edith Ann's Christmas: Just Say Noël" and the second for narrating and executive producing the HBO film, "The Celluloid Closet."

Most recently Tomlin has been hard at work on a pilot for an HBO series titled "Twelve Miles of Bad Road" with co-star Mary Kay Place.

Currently on tour with her one-woman show "An evening of Classic Lily Tomlin," she'll

appear at Greenville's Peace Center Nov. 15.

Tomlin took time to speak with Q-Notes by phone from her Los Angeles home the morning after production wrapped on "Twelve Miles."

QN. Tell us about your new show — what can we expect?

LT. I do lots of characters, about 10 to 12. It's very informal, with more interaction with the audience. I'll talk about Greenville a little bit.

QN. What are you going to say about Greenville?

LT. I don't know. I'll think about it before I get there. I'll do some research on the city before I come. My parents are from Paducah, Ky., and I've spent a lot of time down south — so I'm familiar with the southern style. I'm well acquainted with the area. But as to what I might say? I'd probably say I might read from the Bible, but it's so full of

homosexuality people might get offended."
QN. I understand you've also finished a new movie recently?

LT. It's called "The Walker" and it's set in D.C. It's a very slim slice of a skewed way of what goes on in politics. Woody Harrelson plays a single guy who is friends with all these rich 'women of a certain age.' Kristin Scott Th omas and Lauren Bacall are also in the movie. We play this group of friends that are very close to Woody's character.

QN. Looking back over your career, what moment so far do you remember with particular fondness?

LT. I've had the good fortune to do a lot of fun projects and work with good people. "Nashville" was my first movie. I got to work with Altman and I got nominated for an Academy Award. Then there was "The Late Show" — I loved that. I won the Silver Bear at the Berlin Festival and I was all happy until I

found out there was a Gold Bear. I did "Nine to Five," "All of Me," "Big Business" with Bette Midler and I got to work with David O'Russell in "Flirting With Disaster." I'm crazy about David O'Russell. I've been lucky to do a lot of projects and get a lot of good casting. "The Search" was a big moment for both Jane and me. As a theater piece I love that play."

QN. According to your bio I see that you've collaborated with your partner Jane Wagner for many years. How did the two of you meet?

LT. We had some mutual friends and I was working on Edith Ann and Jane had written an after school teleplay called "JT" that she won an Emmy for. It was so critically acclaimed they ran it year after year. It was so wonderful — it was so tender and secure and edgy. I contacted her and I wanted her to help me with my Edith Ann album. So she came over and I fell madly in love with her.

QN. How long have you been together and what do you

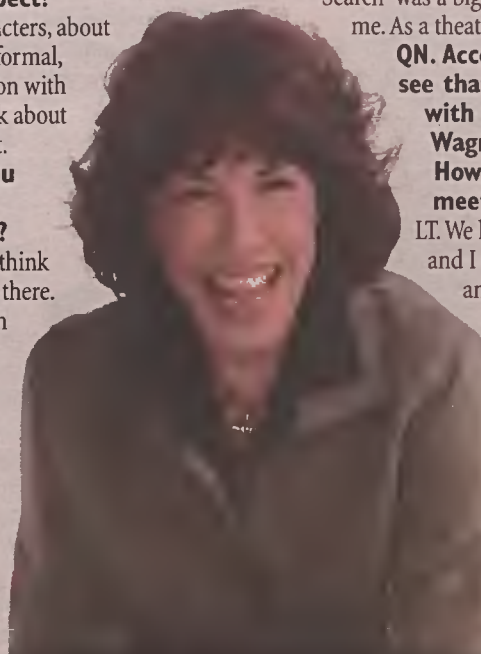
think accounts for the success of your relationship?

LT. We'll have been together 36 years in March. As for the relationship — It's a matter of commitment and something that binds you soul wise. I don't know what it is. I can't imagine Jane not being in my life. If you really know what there is to love about someone it really can't be violated. Our families are intertwined and I'm close to her sister too. It just is.

QN. In all the characters you've created, which one, or ones do you think are most like you?

LT. It's hard to think any of them aren't. I think they're all just some part of me. I'm a little bit of all of them. From Edith Ann to Sister Boogeywoman. There are some characters that I think live in your body a bit more easily. Even those early characters — I feel like I am

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'...she came over and I fell madly in love with her.' Lily Tomlin on Jane Wagner, her partner of 35 years.

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