



# PAUL LYNDE RETURNS TO LAS VEGAS

[ by Russ White ]

**P**aul Lynde was one of the most recognizable household names, faces, and voices throughout the 60s and 70s. His career spanned stage, film, and television. From the voice of Templeton in *Charlotte's Web* to Uncle Arthur in *Bewitched*, America loved Paul Lynde.

Paul returns to Las Vegas in Michael Airington's one person show "The Paul Lynde Show" where Airington takes the audience on a journey through Lynde's life and career. From a struggling actor to his iconic role as The Center Square in *Hollywood Squares*, Airington narrates, sings, dances, and unfolds the complicated life of Paul as Paul.

The set is simple and indicative of two of Lynde's closest relationships: The Center Square and a small table with a decanter of scotch. The picture that Airington paints throughout the show is so vivid and so real, there are moments you forget that's not Paul Lynde on stage.

His looks—close enough. Airington's transformation into Lynde for each show takes an hour to complete and includes full hair and makeup. His mannerisms and gestures—flawless. His voice.

Oh, his voice.

One would think that the nasally, campy, snarky, incomparable voice of Paul Lynde could ever be duplicated—or want to be, but Airington masters Lynde. The voice of Peter Marshall is real; Peter recorded the track for the *Hollywood Squares* segments for Michael. Close your eyes for a moment and listen to the dialog between Peter and Paul. You would swear it was 1978 again.

Michael has spent years performing and perfecting

this character and caricature of Paul. Many of Paul Lynde's friends have helped Airington perfect the character, including Peter Marshall, Cloris Leachman, Kaye Ballard, Karen Valentine, Jan Forbes and the late Andy Williams. This isn't a tribute show—the Paul Lynde Show is produced with the full approval and cooperation of the Paul Lynde estate.

The show incorporates as much variety as Lynde. Airington's monologs, singing, and dancing are entertaining enough, but the history and comedy that was Lynde and Lynde's life are joyfully recounted and will have you hopping back on YouTube for *Hollywood Squares* clips and Hulu for *Bewitched* re-runs. If you find yourself in a conversation with Michael and are interrupted by his phone, you, too, will be downloading Samantha's tinkle-tinkle-tinkle ringtone.

There was no denying Paul Lynde was gay, but Lynde never publicly came out. With so many actors fearful of what coming out would do to their careers, Lynde seemed fearless. While it wasn't something that was discussed, it wasn't something of much controversy either. Paul Lynde passed away in 1982 at the age of 55 in his home in Beverly Hills.

*Tickets for The Paul Lynde Show starring Michael Airington are available at Ticketmaster.com and at Bally's Box Office with performances at 2pm Wednesday - Monday at the Windows Theater in Bally's.*

Photos: Denise Truscello