

Joey Hollingsworth stars in *Simply Magic*

Song and dance man back in the limelight

By KATHRYN KATES
Special

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Canada's premiere song and dance man, Mississauga's **Joey Hollingsworth**, is tapping his way into the hearts of many at The Limelight Dinner Theatre in Toronto.

He's the featured performer in the hit show, *Simply Magic*, also starring illusionist Ken and Barbi Poynter.

The show is slated to close on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, but crowd response might lead to the show's run being extended.

Hollingsworth, 59, was born in London, Ontario, and has been entertaining since he was 5. After high school the bright lights of Toronto beckoned and he never looked back.

Hollingsworth has appeared on over 200 television shows, on both sides of the 49th parallel, including *Razzle Dazzle*, *Wayne & Shuster* and *Rich Little and Friends*. Many will remember Hollingsworth's 18-year stint as the Dancing Salesman on television's *Mr. Rogers*.

Every variety performer in the 1960s dreamed about being seen on *The Ed Sullivan Show* — including Hollingsworth. His dream became a reality when New York agent Eddie Allcourt arranged for Sullivan to view some CBC Television footage of the tapper.

Impressed, Sullivan booked him on the spot.

His talents led him to sharing night club spotlights with veteran entertainers Connie Francis, Anne Murray, Gordon Lightfoot and Neil Sedaka, to name a few. He called the late Tennessee Ernie Ford the most wonderful person in show business.

"When he took me to Harrah's Club in Lake Tahoe, Nevada, he insisted that my name appear in lights with his and on introducing me to the audience," Hollingsworth said.

Hollingsworth has graced the stages of many continents — as an actor and singer — but tapping is his first love. He has danced for fans from all walks of life including heads of state, Canadian and American soldiers and cruise ship patrons.

He has had a number of offers to leave Canada but said, simply, "I'm proud to be Canadian. I've had opportunities to work permanently in the United States, but I feel safer in this country."

Hollingsworth finds himself entertaining around Southern Ontario about six months of the year. For the last 15 years, he and wife and manager, Dolina, have resided in Mississauga.

Hollingsworth, a family man, has a son from his first marriage. Cairo, 25, is a board game inventor. Wife Dolina, meanwhile, is a renowned theatrical costume designer.

"Working with my wife is great. She's got a mind like a computer," he said.

His repertoire spans generations of material and he has been known to work a crowd into a frenzy with his techno-pop renditions of popular tunes by the likes of John Fogerty, Robert Palmer and Huey Lewis. Hollingsworth's talents continue to be in demand.

There is talk of him starring in a revival of the Broadway musical, *Black And Blue*, both in Europe and New York.

To catch Hollingsworth in *Simply Magic*, call The Limelight Dinner Theatre at (416) 482-5200 for dinner and show information.

