

Comic rebuts bathroom gags against provincial Broadway

By Earl Wilson

NEW YORK — Broadway's a bunch of hicks.

"New Yorkers are very provincial, very insular," claims Shelley Berman, whose bathroom joke routine at the Americana Royal Box irritated some Big Town reviewers, and started a new angle in the controversy over what's dirty and what's decent in today's entertainment.

"This material was created in San Francisco. It played the Bible Belt. It brought no adverse comment in Chicago, Dallas, Oklahoma City or Indiana. I did it in London on TV. Nobody objected. Because some columnists in N.Y. knock it, I'm not cutting it.

"RCA decided to record my toilet routine. Are they without taste? Jean Kerr's show

'Mary, Mary,' had such jokes. If you're surrounded by the exalted proscenium of the theater, does that make it O.K.?" He said some of the critics were "stiff-necks" and if they couldn't use the right word for powder room, they couldn't face themselves. This little controversy is helping him do top business and he's got more TV demand than ever.

"I'm not with the hip crowd that thinks Lawrence Welk is wrong, and I also think that Liberace is a great entertainer," Shelley added. "I'm just trying to make a buck and make people laugh."

There's a rumor that Gov. Rocky's cousin, ex-councilman Richard Aldrich, might run for mayor if Lindsay doesn't. "But Mayor Lindsay's going to run," I mentioned to Mrs. Lindsay at a party hoping to get an announcement out of her. "Oh, is he?" she answered.

JOYCE MATHEWS flew to Switzerland with the announced purpose of divorcing Ivor Schmidt, No. 6 among her wedding partners counting Billy Rose and Milton Berle twice each, but flew back without doing it.

THE GREAT LOVE of Archduke Franz Josef of Austria and his Princess Martha is to end in divorce, and rumors are that he'll marry an Austrian girl . . . My funniest recollection of the Inaugural: A woman asked me the time. "Five o'clock," I said . . . She said, "A.M. or P.M.?" "I

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