

Alan Safier | actor, singer, playwright, teacher

Alan Safier | is an American stage, television, and voice-over actor and singer who has toured the United States for 12 years as legendary comedian George Burns in the one-man show *Say Goodnight, Gracie* by Rupert Holmes.

Background and Childhood

Safier was born in Cleveland to Martha Wolk (1913–2007), a homemaker, and Samuel Safier (1910–1965), a pharmacist. As a child, he was always interested in performing, writing and communications. At the age of 12, he began writing a newspaper that covered events on his small suburban street in Shaker Heights, Ohio; the monthly newspaper lasted for one-and-a-half years. He wrote a sports column for the school newspaper at Byron Junior High, was co-editor for the Mayfield High newspaper, and was a contributing editor for *The Ohio University Post* in Athens, Ohio. He also showed an early interest in broadcasting, serving as a disc jockey on the in-house radio station at the Cleveland Veterans' Administration Hospital, and working at WOUB, the Ohio University radio station.

But the theatre always appealed the most to Safier. His first stage appearance was at the age of nine, in an adaptation of Dr. Seuss's *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*. He continued acting in junior high, high school, teen theatre, summer stock, and community theatre productions, including a mounting of Michael Weller's *Moonchildren* at the renowned multi-racial Karamu Theatre in Cleveland.

Professional Career

After receiving an MFA in Acting at Ohio University, Alan Safier debuted off-Broadway in another play called *Say Goodnight, Gracie*, this one by Ralph Pape and about neither George nor Gracie. (He is the only person in the known universe who has acted in both plays with that title.) Soon after, he was cast in the 30th anniversary off-Broadway revival of the seminal *New Faces of 1952*, taking on the roles originated by Ronny Graham, which included emceeding the show, doing a Truman Capote take-off (as "Mr. Kaput") and performing in a comedy sketch written by a young Melvin Brooks. (Toward the end of the run, Eartha Kitt, who was in the original 1952 Broadway production, joined the cast.)

Some of his other New York, stock and regional theatre credits include Steve Martin's *The Underpants*, the off-Broadway comedy revue *Scrambled Feet*, Littlechap in the Anthony Newley/Leslie Bricusse musical *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off*, Bluntschli in George Bernard Shaw's *Arms & the Man*, and Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice* (in which he co-starred with legendary Group Theatre actor Morris Carnovsky). He premiered the contemporary comedy *The Battles of Richmond Hill* by Penny Jackson, in which he re-introduced to the New York stage a perfectly executed "Danny Thomas" spit-take. His most recent role was Jack Jerome in Neil Simon's Tony-winning *Broadway Bound* at Cleveland's Beck Center.

He had a six-month run as Herb Schwartz in the comedy-drama *The Last Schwartz* at The Zephyr in Hollywood. Other west coast credits include the homeless Vietnam veteran Lou in Steve Tesich's *The Speed of Darkness*, Stephen in *Dealer's Choice* by Patrick Marber, Frenchy in Clifford Odets's *Rocket to the Moon*, and Buddy Fidler in the Cy Coleman musical, *City of Angels*. He also starred as an older-but-wiser Michael in *The Men from the Boys*, Mart Crowley's sequel to his ground-breaking play, *The Boys in the Band*.

In 2008, he took on the role of George Burns in the U.S. tour of the Tony-nominated one-man show *Say Goodnight, Gracie*, and has been performing in it ever since. In addition to Burns, Safier has played several famous and infamous people in his stage career: Albert Einstein in the world-premiere musical *The Smartest Man in the World*, John Adams in *1776*, and Spiro Agnew in Gore Vidal's *An Evening with Richard M. Nixon*. He also starred as Charles J. Guiteau in the Los Angeles premiere of Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins*.

Other Work

Alan Safier may be familiar to audiences from hundreds of TV and radio voice-overs (notably as the Kibbles 'n' Bits dog and the voice of TurboTax). He has appeared on the daytime dramas "Passions," "Days of Our Lives," and "Generations." One of his recent prime-time guest star appearances was on "The Wizards of Waverly Place."

His cd of standards from the '30s, '40s and '50s, *Alan Safier Sings the Songs of George and Gracie's Heyday*, is available at most music sites.

Alan currently teaches stage acting and voice-over at Working Actor Studio in New York City. He is the author of the plays *'Round and 'Round We Go; Love, Loss, & What I Drove; What's Wrong with Pete?*; and his most recent, *Say, Kids! What Time Is It?* Safier is also the composer of the song "Another Tuesday Morning" on the Jim Brickman cd *Simple Things*.

Personal Information

Alan Safier resides in New York City. He's a passionate Cleveland Guardians baseball fan, an avid reader, and a lover of classic Hollywood films and American standards music. He's also an incurable politics junkie.

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