



KENT TREPTOW / INDEPENDENT

Bobby Von Merta, also known as Bobby Badfingers, is an entertainer who makes music by snapping his fingers.

Getting it done in a snap

By Dave Brooks
Independent

Bobby Von Merta said he usually gets the same reaction from promoters when they hear about his musical talent.

"First they laugh in my face, then they call security," he joked during a recent interview in Downtown Huntington Beach.

Perhaps it's his alter ego Bobby Badfingers, the self-proclaimed world's faster finger-snapper, or maybe it's his Magnum PI meets Elvis Presley persona. But don't be fooled, he can snap anything.

The Miami Sound Machine, Wipeout, even dueling banjos. If it has a beat, just put a microphone near his hands and try to watch as he snaps as fast as 30 times per second with the song.

"I was 4 years old and I was watching flamenco dancers on

Bobby Von Merta's alter ego, Bobby Badfingers, is the self-proclaimed world's faster finger-snapper.

television. I couldn't see their castanets in their hands and I thought they were just snapping their fingers," he said.

"So I told my parents that I wanted to start practicing snapping, and they said 'sure, whatever son.' But within a few years, I could snap any song."

And snap he did. For years Von Merta would perform at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and even appeared as a musical guest on David Letterman, but he said it was difficult to pursue his passion full time because he owned and operated an RV sales business in Santa Clara.

Five years ago at the age of 42 he cashed out of the trade into early

retirement and pursued snapping full time.

'There's even a potential hit record in this thing.'

Bobby Von Merta

Stamos would name drop him on television shows.

"I think our family has pretty much adopted him," said John Stamos' mother Loretta Stamos. "He was hired to do a party for my son and we've really fallen in love with him. We want to see him make it."

Stamos said she even enjoys his

signature, the "promo shot," a staggered pose with his middle fingers up at the audience, his thumbs pressed on their rear as if he was getting ready to snap.

"You can do it and get away with it," he said.

Now he said he's preparing for his biggest snapping feat to date, the launch of his new line of snap related merchandise. He has instructional DVDs including Snapology 101, a line of T-shirts and a series of bobbleheads. He's even hired a team of graphic artists and writers to put together a book on snapping.

"I'm basically going to take the whole package and try to make it work around the world," he said, pointing out that finger-snapping is not language specific. "Everybody snaps," he said.

His plan is to produce everything

See SNAP, Page B2

SNAP

Continued from B1

himself and present the books and DVD to a major media company for marketing and release. He said he has to do it all because it's hard to find

someone to sponsor him through the creative process.

"You don't know how many people I've gone through with this," he said. "It's hard to get people to even look at me."

Von Merta recently scored a big victory when he convinced William Morris Agency, a major talent broker in Beverly Hills, to

represent him. He said he is now hoping to launch a cartoon series revolving around his Badfingers persona with him giving snapping tips between commercial breaks.

"There's even a potential hit record in this thing," he said. "It would be an instant freaky hit. We could call it 'snap rap.'"