

COMEDY

Kate Clinton: Serious About Humor

by Laura Phillips

Do you search the comedy scene in vain for something simultaneously intelligent, silly, sophisticated, outrageous, satirical, inspiring, and not offensive to your values and politics? Do you occasionally stay up for David Letterman, or seek out HBO specials, only to find they're not nearly as funny as the fact that you gave TV another hopeful try? Are your laughing fits too few and far between, reserved for San Francisco Mime Troupe and Lily Tomlin appearances? Have you been making your own fun at home because the commercial products don't meet your standards?

If your last answer was "yes," that's a good sign—but still, it's nice to go out sometimes. So here's your opportunity: Kate Clinton returns to Eugene Thursday, November 5 to the University of Oregon's EMU Ballroom. This witty and irreverent "feminist"—that's feminist plus humorist—believes that she who laughs, lasts. Clinton's popularity not only lasts, it grows. She's crisscrossed the country, from Manhattan's Bottom Line to the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco, delighting a wide variety of audiences at festivals, colleges, and clubs. Critics of every stripe—feminist, lesbian/gay, and mainstream—have praised her political and sexual satire, and her polished, yet uproarious, style.

Vermont's *Vanguard Press* explains: "The secret to her humor is not just making fun, it's reflecting our lives back to us, taking the insults and turning them into affir-



KATE CLINTON

mations." According to the *St. Petersburg Times*, Clinton "combines the confident energy of someone who is right and knows it with the daring experimentalism of the wisecracker at the back of the class." *The Boston Globe* asserts, "Kate Clinton is one of the fastest rising stars."

In fact, the only bad news Kate's received lately involved a contract that fell through. She'd hoped to be booked as the opening act for the Pope's recent World Celibacy Tour (she is, after all, a Recovering Catholic). The cancellation opened up her fall schedule, allowing her an evening in Eugene. It's a natural stop for Clinton anyway, as she's played to packed houses here twice before. Besides, what community could offer a warmer welcome to her latest routine, in which she psychically channels messages from "Mona," a 40,000-year-old feminist entity? Also included in this all-new show will be commentary ranging from the Iran/Contra hearings to condoms, and other topical issues here on the "Planet of the Guys."

Clinton is certainly not, as she describes mainstream comedians, "a cheerleader for the status quo." Her jokes and stories encourage the audience to question assump-

tions and authorities, to express themselves and create change. "In typical humor," she points out, "we all know whose butts are the butts of the jokes." So Kate's sworn off sexist, racist, anti-gay, ageist, and ableist jokes. What else is there? Plenty.

But let's get to the bottom line: How funny is she? Well, Clinton is whooping, hooting, falling-into-each-others-laps funny. Someone recently interrupted one of her concerts by calling out, "This is the best time I've had in my whole life!" People of both genders and all sexual orientations leave her shows massaging overworked smile muscles, and those who wear mascara had best make it waterproof.

So if you enjoy seeing taboos flouted and wit flaunted, consider yourself invited. The fun starts Thursday, November 5, at 8 pm in the UO's Erb Memorial Union Ballroom, which is wheelchair accessible. ASL-interpreting will be provided by Iris Peters. Tickets are \$8 in advance at Mother Kali's Books and the EMU Main Desk; they will be \$10 at the door. This hilarious event is co-sponsored by Rosenlips Productions and the UO's Gay and Lesbian Alliance. For more information, call GALA at 686-3360.

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