

Addotta paid his dues on road to becoming first-rate comedian

By Tom Hill
Of the Emerald

Kip Addotta has paid his share of dues on the road to comedy fame. When he moved to Los Angeles to hit it big, his first job was parking cars.

Addotta, who is appearing at the Hult Center's Soreng Theater Wednesday night, said he held several such jobs for his first year and a half or so in Los Angeles. He said the advantage was, "If something came up (in the way of show business work), I could split right away."

The "parking-lot gig," as the 41-year-old comedian called it, helped him make an important contact: He met the producer of the daytime soap opera "Days of Our Lives." Addotta appeared as a pianist in 11 episodes of the show.

He went on to perform at The Comedy Store, a nightclub, and the television game show "Make Me Laugh." He has also appeared on "The Tonight Show" and "Late Night with David Letterman."

Recently, Addotta has put his energy into making albums. His latest effort is "Life in the Slaw Lane." Unlike his first two albums, which were more oriented toward straight stand-up comedy, "Slaw Lane" is a compilation of nine humorous songs ("Who says you can't dance to comedy?" he asks) with titles like "My Baby Has to Have a Tattoo," "U-Haul Airlines" and "If I Were You, I Wouldn't Be."

Addotta may be best known for his song "Wet Dream," which has been played frequently on the nationally syndicated "Dr. Demento" radio show. The song features a monologue with possibly every fish-related pun known to man, from doing something for the "halibut" to donating money for "Jerry's squids" to "belly-ing up to the sandbar." At one point, Addotta describes a woman he meets in the sandbar: "She drank like a...she drank a lot."

He said the idea for the song came from his association with singer Jose Feliciano when he and Feliciano were represented by the same agency. Feliciano, he said, was a punster. "He bored me to tears with those goddamn puns. So one day I said, 'I'm gonna show this guy—I'm going to give him an orgy



Kip Addotta

of puns."

Addotta said he has been a comedy enthusiast since he was a small child, when he would listen to Jack Benny, Fibber McGee and Molly, W.C. Fields, and Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy on the radio. Later, with the advent of television, he added Soupy Sales and Jackie Gleason to his list of heroes.

"I always felt comedy was a calling," he said. "I had a special thing for comedians. I never believed I would become a comedian, but I always fantasized about it."

His decision to become a professional funny man was spurred by a very unfunny event: the death of his first wife when he was 25 years old.

"It allowed me to go a little crazy," he said. He remarried, and his wife and three children decided to move to Los Angeles. "We said, 'We're going to have an adventure,'" he recalled.

Even after he began getting comedy work in Los Angeles, life was not easy, he said. "It takes a long time to work your way up," he said.

Wednesday's appearance will be Addotta's first in Eugene. "Life in the Slaw Lane" has sold particularly well here, according to Addotta's manage-

ment company, so he will make a side trip here after performing in Portland.

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