

Confessions of a comedian

David Sedaris' show kept audience in continuous laughter with embellished non-fiction and sardonic jabs

BY JOSH LINTEREUR
PULSE REPORTER

Toward the end of his appearance Friday night at the Hult Center, David Sedaris made a confession.

Live performances, he explained, are his testing ground for new material, most of which he rewrites on a nightly basis. And though he sometimes feels compelled to come clean regarding his use of unpolished material with a paying audience, it's a detail he saves for the end.

"I never get up beforehand and say, this next story I'm just not sure about at all, it meanders and doesn't really come to any conclusion, but you paid handsomely to be here, so let's all just try to have a good time," he said to the audience. "I try to save that information to the very end, and then I apologize if I need to."

Judging by the near continuous rumble of laughter during his more than 90-minute performance, the best-selling author, playwright and National Public Radio contributor didn't owe any apologies.

Standing behind a lectern, the nasally voiced author elevated his already hilarious prose by speaking with a masterful sense of comedic

rhythm, pausing at just the right moments and using the subtlest inflections for effect.

Sedaris opened by reading a newly penned fable about a cat and a baboon. Filled with sardonic jabs at class tension, the story tread new ground for the writer, whose work can be typically classified as embellished non-fiction.

He followed the fable with two essays that occasionally delved into bawdy territory with references to a bestiality magazine and a particularly nasty boil Sedaris recently developed.

Throughout the evening, Sedaris showed his uncanny ability to find an awkward sort of tenderness in the most bizarre situations. While reading, "Old Faithful," a story about relationships that appeared in *The New Yorker*, he recalled the time his father randomly blurted out that he'd always remained faithful to Sedaris' mother. Looking back, Sedaris put into perspective what he believes was not a matter of a guilty conscience, but a search for self-worth.

"Sometimes the sins you haven't committed are all that you have to hold onto," he said. "If you're really

desperate, you might need to grope. For example, I've never killed anyone — with a hammer. Or, I've never stolen from anyone, who didn't deserve it."

Even when not reading from one of his masterfully composed essays, Sedaris' darkly irreverent wit appeared effortless. During a brief question and answer session near the end of the show, an audience member inquired about Sedaris' brother, who appears frequently in the author's stories. Sedaris invoked laughter and cringing as he talked about how his brother had recently become a father.

"She adores him," he said of his brother's daughter. "If you gave that baby a gun and said, ok, you have to shoot one of your parents, she wouldn't even think, she would shoot her mother like that. And that must be the greatest feeling."

Sedaris also plugged a new book he edited, "Children Playing Before a Statue of Hercules." Sales of the book are donated to 826NYC, a nonprofit tutoring center in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The book contains short stories by contemporary literary giants such as Alice Munro, Joyce Carol Oates and Tobias Wolff, who Sedaris cited as a major influence.

"I wouldn't be here if it weren't for Tobias Wolff. Every time I think of killing myself, I think, well, he has a



COURTESY

Best-selling author David Sedaris showed his ability to find tenderness in bizarre situations during his show at the Hult Center.

new book coming out," he said.

After the show, the man labeled a "literary rock star" by *The New York Times*, showed the dedication and humility that have helped him establish an enormous following. Though he is currently touring 31 cities in 31 days,

the author was in no rush to leave. Instead Sedaris sat at a table graciously signing autographs and politely engaging each person that approached the table.

joshlinter@dailyemerald.com

University Health Center

ALLERGY SEASON IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Helpful hints to reduce "hay fever" symptoms

- Exercise early on windy and dry days
- Limit outdoor activity on windy and dry days
- Avoid rubbing your eyes
- Keep windows closed at night
- Shower and shampoo hair before bed
- Wash bed linens often
- Use pollen mask
- Keep your pet off your bed
- If using allergy meds, take them early
- Avoid lying in the grass
- Wear sun glasses to help keep pollen out of your eyes



Over the Counter products from the University Health Center Pharmacy:

Product	Size	Price	Product	Size	Price
Actifed	100	\$2.00	Chlor-Trimeton 4 mg tab (generic)	100	\$3.00
Benadryl 25 mg caps (generic)	100	\$3.00	Claritin 10 mg (generic)	30	\$3.50
Chlor-Trimeton 4 mg tab (generic)	24	\$2.00	Alavert-D 12 hr.	12	\$9.00
			Sudafed 30 mg (generic)	24	\$2.00



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

346-2770 for medical appts.
356-4454 for pharmacy
<http://healthcenter.uoregon.edu>

Feed Your Mind & Fill Your Belly

...without
emptying your wallet!



"Bowls, Burritos, & Beyond"

Fresh, home-made whole foods
with lots of veggie & vegan options
...mixed with goofy artwork, snappy tunes
& an oxygen-based atmosphere

Organic Juice & Smoothie Bar
Scrumptious Home-made Vegan Baked Goods
Micro-brews on tap

760 Blair Blvd

(@ 8th Ave & Monroe, just west of downtown)

Open Mon-Sat 11-10pm; Sun 11-9pm 868-0668