

Politics, empowerment and some laughs

BY EMILLY PRADO
STAFF WRITER

Andie Main is a stand-up comedian and the founder of Revolution Comedy, a bimonthly series that marries comedy and music with fundraising for progressive organizations. Since Revolution Comedy began in 2016, it has raised over \$10,000 for causes such as Planned Parenthood, Q Center, and Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization, or IRCO. Its next event, "Stand Up to Literally Impeach Trump" on Aug. 28, will benefit Swing Left, a digital community focused on connecting users with their nearest Swing Districts in hopes of regaining Democratic power in the House of Representatives by 2018.

Emily Prado: *How does comedy allow us to deal with trauma and the bleakness of our political climate in ways that other avenues might not?*

Andie Main: At its best, stand-up comedy is cathartic. Sitting in a room, listening to a person tell you their truths can do a lot more for people than just make them laugh. I get a lot of feedback from people who are moved by the topics covered in my jokes. I am focused on politics and empowerment right now. I

probably won't be able to move on from these focal points until the world radically changes, but I think comedy is a way for people to remember experiences and have empathy in a more direct way than music or movies because the act of laughing is actually involuntary when you think about it. I consider it to be a way humans communicate validation with each other, which we totally need right now.

E.P.: *The election sparked the launch of many politically inclined events and organizations, but Revolution Comedy started in February 2016. Can you tell me about what moved you to act at that time?*

A.M.: It was Bernie Sanders! I had done a

couple of fundraisers for him over the winter but hadn't yet branded as Revolution Comedy. We had a couple shows at Bossanova Ballroom, and I wanted to do more dates, but it didn't quite come together. Then Dylan Reiff of Kickstand Comedy Space approached me about doing a regular series, and I created the show based around his invitation. Eventually, we grew too big for the space, and that's why we moved to Curious (Comedy Theater).

E.P.: *In what ways has Revolution Comedy changed since the election?*

A.M.: We got bigger. The first show at Curious Comedy Theater was the day after the election. When we planned it, we thought it was (going to) be a party, but instead it was more like trying to entertain at a funeral. Our attendance has shot up, and the audiences are very smart and understand a lot of references that I would not have expected from a regular crowd at a comedy club. I don't know if that's because a lot of people are educating themselves about this era – I def have stepped up my media consumption of current events – or they were already smart, but I sure do appreciate them.

E.P.: *How do you decide which group or cause to feature?*

A.M.: Whatever is making me uncomfortable!

E.P.: *Your upcoming event calls for the impeachment of (Donald Trump) and is benefiting SwingLeft.org, but a successful impeachment and removal would make Mike Pence president. What do you see as the next steps to continue challenging this administration, should the impeachment work?*

A.M.: I think if we do reach impeachment, it will bring down the entire current White House. Russiagate has money and roots in so much of the Republican Party that I could see Pence and Paul Ryan going down too. I think this generation has become so radicalized that we will resist all of the



COURTESY PHOTO

Andie Main is the founder of Revolution Comedy.

fascism all of the time, whenever it shows its head.

E.P.: *How has punk rock prepared you for community organizing?*

A.M.: Ha ha! I love this question. To me, punk equals authenticity and direct action, which is a part of my identity.

E.P.: *Anything else folks should know about Revolution Comedy and Andie Main?*

A.M.: I try really hard. I love my dog, Martha. And this is my real hair. Go to Facebook.com/RevolutionComedyPDX to like the page and keep in touch with what we've got cooking up next!

IF YOU GO

What: Revolution Comedy Presents: Stand Up to Literally Impeach Trump

When: 7 p.m. Monday, Aug. 28

Where: Curious Comedy Theater, 5225 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Portland

Tickets: \$6 at merc_tickets.com

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