

THE ABSURDIST

Winner of the Andy Kauffman Award, comedian Brent Weinbach returns to Eugene

Brent Weinbach is goofy, strange and smart — the perfect combo for a comedian coming to Eugene. He’s your Renaissance everyman: A former professional jazz pianist, Weinbach writes and co-directs the web series *Pound House*, hosts a podcast on video game music that predates the millennium, and has appeared on reigning comedy platforms like *Conan*, Comedy Central, HBO and IFC as well as touring with the Comedians of Comedy.

EW caught up with the comedian to chat about work, life and upcoming projects, though he mostly talked about obscure board games and his abiding passion for 1980s video games while brushing his teeth. Weinbach brings his nerdy absurdity to the WOW Hall June 5.

Has your comic style changed over the years?

I have mellowed out a bit. I am still deadpan and serious on stage but also silly. My focus has shifted more on physical humor, sounds of words rather than words. My set used to be more memorized, and now I’ll just have an idea and try to flesh it out on stage improvising punch lines.

What is your writing process like?

I like things to come out organically. I never try and sit down and force anything. Most jokes come from making inside jokes become outside jokes that people can get in on.

What’s your favorite response to the ol’ “You’re a comedian, tell me a joke” command?

“Wanna hear a joke?” Then I make fart noises with my armpit.

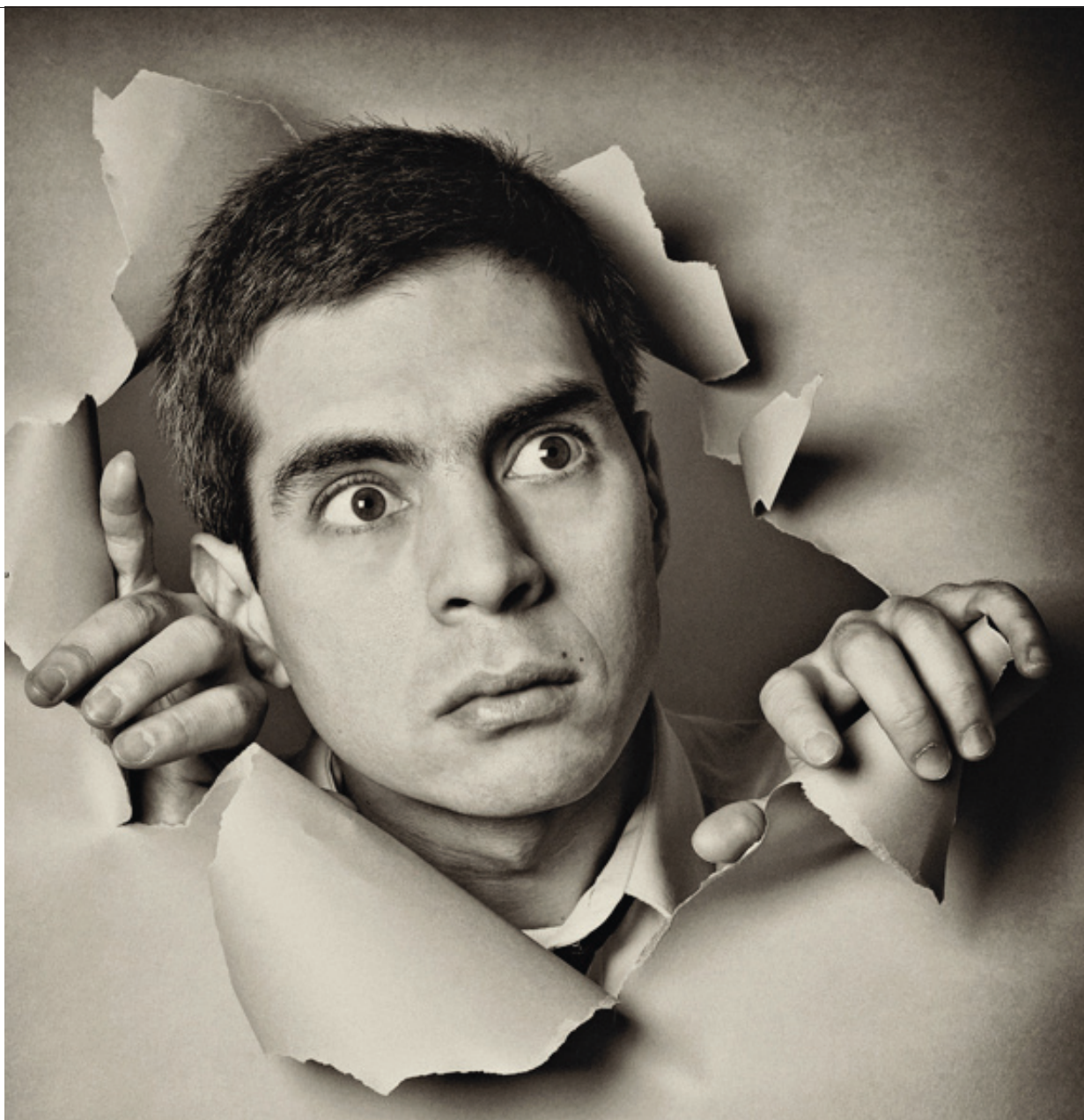
And your favorite response to the “What are you” question, as in race?

I do get that a lot. I remember Paul Mooney asking me just that, “What are you?” in a green room at one of his shows. He has a unique way about him — standoffish, but friendly in a Paul Mooney kind of way. So I said, “What’s my ethnic background, you mean?” I told him I am half Filipino and half Jewish and he just says, “I knew you were mixed.”

Then, after every time I would introduce him on stage, he would say, “Thank you, little half-nigga.” I don’t know, I was very proud of that coming from him, being half non-white.

What is your relationship with Eugene?

My first friend ever was named Eugene. Big boy. I had to fight him for black-belt initiation and got punched in the throat, kicked in the groin.



And Eugene, Oregon?

I was there in 2004 when I did more road shows — did a show in a Chinese restaurant. I was also just in Eugene with Aziz [Ansari]. From kicks to the groin to now, I feel I have Eugene-upgraded and glad Eugene is back in my life again.

What’s coming up for you that you are excited about?

Tomorrow I’m playing Augsburg, a board game I just bought on eBay before you called. Me and my boys are getting together, you know.

And in terms of comedy, or projects, coming up?

I’m performing in a month-long comedy festival in Edinburgh, which I’m not excited about because my friends won’t be there.

How did Pound House get started?

DJ Douggpound and I wanted to make a video together with Johnny Pemberton. Doug’s idea was to sell a beanbag on Craigslist. Doug had trouble editing it, sat on it for a year and finally finished it. Once we were working together we came up with a creepier David Lynch thing. [Comedy duo] Tim and Eric liked it, and suggested a web series spin-off on our own beanbag video.

Anything you want to say about the show or general advice?

It’s just as silly as it looks. It’s not subversive. Respond from your body and your heart, not your head. I don’t want anyone doing any math on June 5. ■

Brent Weinbach performs with Elicia Sanchez 8 pm Thursday, June 5, at WOW Hall; \$5 adv, \$8 UO students, \$10 public.

“up in my grill”

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