

Up Front with Wanda Sykes

Comedian reaches
out to promote
Portland show

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THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Comedian Wanda Sykes is reaching out to fans about her upcoming Oct. 10 performance in Portland. She was able to phone into the Portland Observer on Wednesday to generate some publicity about the show:

Hi Wanda—we look forward to having you in Portland soon. What do you know or remember about the area? What if anything do you like to do when you come here?

Yes! I have performed in Portland before. I love the audience, they're smart, they just want to have a good time, they're open-minded. It's always a good time. As for the city itself I love the food - I love the farm to table stuff!

Do you have any advice for aspiring comedians?

To do it as often as you can, do it on stage, build your confidence on stage. Once you get your first five minutes, it's easy to get stuck there. Keep trying new material. Eventually you'll find your voice, you just need

Comedian Wanda Sykes will be coming to Portland for a performance at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall on Friday, Oct. 10.



to keep doing it.

Is there anything about this work that surprised you? Or continues to surprise you now?

Something can always happen - I do sometimes expect the unexpected. When you first start out, you have no idea. Their moods can change. It depends who's on before you. There are so many variables! Be prepared. I remember the first time I was doing these one-nighters in New Jersey, a man dropped his gun and it spun around on the floor. And then a bunch of guys were checking their pockets, just to make sure it wasn't their gun that fell. I thought I'm going to just do my five minutes and get the hell out of here.

When did you realize you were funny?

I realized I was funny from my peers, people would write in my yearbook "Thanks for brightening up class." My class, my teachers loved me. I was not disruptive, but I was good at lightening the mood.

Who are your favorite comedians?

Moms Mabley! Back in the late 60s, she was huge. I remember watching her on the Ed Sullivan show. She was so funny! Oh yes, and Bill Cosby, Richard Prior, George Carlin, and Joan Rivers.

I'm sorry to hear about Joan—I've heard her death impacted the comedy scene pretty hard.

Yes, she led a great life. She was a real trailblazer and opened so many doors for female comics. I'm glad she was around for so long. She's was so inspiring!

Wanda Sykes comes to town Friday, Oct. 10 and will be performing at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. Find out more at Portland.5.com.

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