

Continued from previous page

“That still turned out great, because you’d be amazed what kind of energy 50 people can bring,” he said. “And then when you got a comic who hasn’t been on stage in a month, what they bring — so that coming together just makes it so much more beautiful, so much more appreciative, and just goes to show you how live entertainment is just so powerful and just really needed.”

One place that has not seen or heard his comedy in a while is Central Oregon. Lee estimated his last visit was around 2006. His comedy tends toward life, family, “and just silly, stupid things that we don’t think about until I say them,” he said. “I bring a lot of things out there just to make people think and laugh and let go, and just realize, ‘You know what? It is OK, Boo Boo, it is OK.’ Especially at a live comedy show, because this is adult humor, and I think it is time for those adults to let loose and just laugh at life.”

The Tower Theatre, meanwhile, will be helping plug Central Oregonians back into comedy via UnCabaret, a long-time comedy and storytelling event based in Los Angeles.

Unlike Lee, UnCabaret founder and host Beth Lapidés (luh-PEE-des) really didn’t have much of a problem with pivoting to Zoom. In fact, Vulture Magazine has deemed the livestream “UnCab” events among the best for comedy. The show streams at 7:30 p.m. Sunday and features talent such as Julia Sweeney, formerly of “SNL,” Hannah Einbinder, who stars on “Hacks” on HBO Max, comedian Alex Edelman, a regular on “Conan,” and Alec Mapa, whose more than 40 guest roles on shows such as “Ugly Betty” and “Desperate Housewives” have



Submitted photo

Comedian Beth Lapidés is the founder of UnCabaret, a unique storytelling event with a long history in Los Angeles.

If You Go

What: Comedian Carl Lee

Details:

- 7 p.m. Thursday at Open Space, 220 NE Lafayette Ave., Bend; \$40 plus fees for a table for four
- 7 p.m. Friday at High Desert Music Hall, 818 SW Forest Ave., Redmond; \$30 for a table for two, \$40 for a table for four, plus fees
- 7 p.m. Saturday at Craft Kitchen and Brewery, 62988 Layton Ave., Suite 103, Bend; \$30 for a table for two, \$35 for a table for three, \$50 for a group table (seats eight), plus fees

Contact: bendticket.com

What: UnCabaret, presented in collaboration with the Tower Theatre

When: 7:30 p.m. Sunday

Where: Livestream

Cost: \$15

Contact: towertheatre.org or 541-317-0700

earned him an unofficial title of “America’s Gaysian Sweetheart.”

Change has been a constant of UnCabaret, which has been going for 27 years, albeit in different venues, occasional hiatuses and other adjustments. The show is returning to live events but will also keep its Zoom iterations going, Lapidés said.

One thing that has remained steady through it all: comedians letting down their hair and presenting stories and comedy in more of an “If you weren’t there, you missed it” manner. UnCab made for a much looser style of comedy than the rehearsed joke-telling in which comedians were expected to earn a laugh every seven seconds (really) that was more prevalent at the time.

“Comedians were super-frustrated. They were having to do tight 10s,” she said. “Everyone’s trying to get ... their sitcom. The way you got it was you developed this perfect 10 minutes. ... It was really about perfection.”

The event that sparked UnCab was a one-person show Lapidés was doing at a venue called The Women’s Club.

“They were laughing a little harder than it really warranted — I knew how funny it was,” Lapidés said, laughing self-deprecatingly. “I was like, ‘When was the last time you guys laughed?’ They were like, ‘We don’t go to comedy clubs. We’re women and we’re artists and we’re lesbians, and when we go to a comedy club, they make fun of us.’”

“So I said, ‘Well I’ll make you a show. It will be un-homophobic. It will be un-misogynist. It will be un-cabaret.’”

Another prompt came when she had to follow controversial comic Andrew Dice Clay one evening at The Comedy Store, a famous club in Los Angeles.

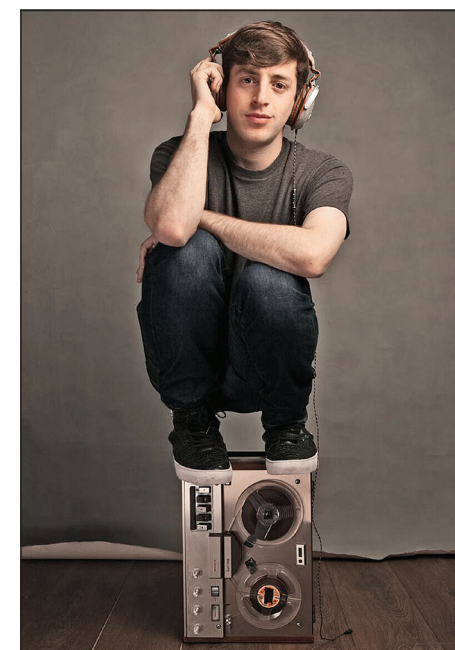
“I was hating him for doing his misogynist material, I was hating the audience for laughing at him, and I was hating myself for hating everyone,” Lapidés said. “I was primed for trying to innovate.”

Early participants included Taylor Negrón, Judy Toll, Janeane Garofalo, David Cross and Bob Odenkirk. But it took a little while to find a home and an audience.

“It was sort of conceived at The Women’s Building, and then gestated at Highways and sort of born at LunaPark,” Lapidés explained, referring to venues it called home. Once it hunkered down for a stretch at LunaPark, “Slowly but surely, after a couple of months, it really built a lot of momentum.”

“It was really at LunaPark where audiences started to return with their friends. This idea that it has to be new material every time became the thing,” Lapidés said. “Intimacy was important to us, and conversational comedy was important.”

In other words, a lot more like what modern comedy has evolved into.



Submitted

Comedian Alex Edelman is a regular on “Conan.”

“It’s much looser. Things have really changed,” Lapidés said. “Over the course of UnCabaret, I mean, you can give me credit for it. I won’t just take credit for it, but other people have said that UnCabaret was certainly one of the forces that (changed things) through persistence.”

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