



From left, Michael Parish, Elaine Barney, Kanga Jok, Eugene Webb, Eunae Hong, Donna Hudson and Aleene Gray at Boulevard Blue in Cleveland.

EUGENE WEBB | SPECIAL TO THE PLAIN DEALER

Young comics hit the Improvs, hope tour is the next big thing

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the host of Laugh Track, now a low emissions column . . . Mike McIntyre.



MICHAEL MCINTYRE

about stand-up comedy. “None of us is really dirty. And anyone who has been in a relationship or has delinquent friends can relate.”

Young notes on stage that he loves music.

“Music is powerful. I remember I would always have girls over to

the house and I’d put on Prince’s ‘Purple Rain.’ You got to be careful though. I came out in my hallway, my mom was naked.”

Details: The Young American Comedy Tour will perform at 8 and 10:15 p.m. today and Saturday and 7 p.m. Sunday at the Improv in the Powerhouse, 2000 Sycamore St., on the west bank of Cleveland’s Flats. Tickets are \$7. Call 216-696-4677.

bomber after the deed, that his act travels far from the wooden puppet talking while the ventriloquist drinks a glass of water.

The audience laughs. Achmed raises his eyebrows and screams, “Silence! I kill you!” The place is in stitches as a puppeteer finds a way to make an audience laugh at a suicide bomber.

Details: Dunham’s 7 p.m. show is sold out but tickets are available for the 10 p.m. show Saturday at Lakewood Civic Auditorium, 14100 Franklin Blvd. (inside Lakewood High School). Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased at the door.

Salad days

Comedian John Pinette, former Broadway star of “Hairspray” and the guy no one helps in the final episode of “Seinfeld,” packs a few extra pounds.

So do many Clevelanders. That’s why his self-deprecating humor (his CDs are titled “Show Me the Buffet” and “I’m Starvin’”) hits home.

“I went a nutritionist . . . I walk into his office he goes, ‘Well, the good news is, you can have all the salad you want,’” Pinette says in his act. “I don’t want any salad! He wanted me to eat salad. As a food! Salad’s not food. Salad comes with the food. You go out, you order a steak. What do they do? They bring you a salad. They don’t even charge you anything for it, cause it ain’t worth anything, cause it ain’t food! Salad comes before a meal. Salad is a promissory note that food will soon arrive.”

Details: Pinette’s performances tonight and Saturday are sold out, but tickets remain for 7:30 p.m. Sunday (\$18 general admission, \$23 preferred) at Hilarities 4th Street Theatre inside Pickwick & Frolic, 2035 East Fourth St., Cleveland. Call 216-736-4242.

Well, folks, that’s my time. Enjoy the breakfast Snickers. And Kit Kats. And 3 Musketeers. And please don’t forget to tip your carrier.

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Thank you, Cleveland. We care for the comedy environment here at Laugh Track. That’s why all the jokes are recycled.

Young blood

The Young American Comedy Tour puts some top touring comics, some of whom have headlined Cleveland shows on their own, together on one stage. They all have impressive credits on Comedy Central or the late-night shows and each tells jokes for an equal amount of time, 30 minutes apiece, instead of the usual 15-, 30-, 45-minute format of regular club shows.

“There is no single headliner. We are all headliners,” says Mike Young, the show’s founder and one of the acts.

“This tour is just about me grabbing my friends who are the funniest guys in the business. But nobody was working enough. So I started a tour and now we’ve done about 15 Improvs,” Young said. “I want this tour to be the next biggest thing. I’ve watched the Blue Collar Comedy guys and all these other tours and my friends are as funny as these guys.”

The Cleveland show will feature Young, who describes himself as the “every guy” who can’t grow up; Ian Edwards, a former “Saturday Night Live” writer whom Young describes as “mellow and supersmooth”; and Steve Simone, a stand-up who plays to the college crowd and whom Young calls “the erratic little brother.”

Edwards was a cast member on MTV’s “Punk’d.” Born in England, he lived in Jamaica and later in New York when he was growing up. Others rotating in and out on the tour are Bert Kreisher, the basis for National Lampoon’s “Van Wilder”; Steve Byrne, a hilarious Kent State grad; and Bret Ernst, who came through town on Vince Vaughn’s Wild West Comedy Tour.

They’re all young, but not *that* young. “Our demographic is 19 to 50,” says Young, 35, who is writing and producing an HBO drama

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