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Comedian and actor Bill Burr to bring standup act to Keith-Albee

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Bill Burr has been doing stand-up comedy since the 1990s appearing frequently on programs such as the "Conan O'Brien Show," "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon" and "The Late Show with David Letterman." He is also an actor who has had a recurring role as the character Kuby on the hit TV show "Breaking Bad."



On Wednesday, Sept. 18, Burr will bring his tell-it-like-it-is comedy to the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center. The show, which is a part of the Marshall Artists Series season, will begin at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25. More information can be found at 304-696-6656 or ticketmaster.com.

Burr derives a lot of his comedy from the news events of the day, riffing on the craziness that happens in the world on a daily basis.

"I'll focus on subjects or topics and usually I'll just write down a word," said Burr. "Or, most of the time I'll just think, 'I'm going to talk about that.' Then, I'll go up onstage and start talking about a subject and that is how I get my jokes. I always equate it to, like, if something funny happened to you and then you go meet your friends in a bar, you wouldn't write it all out, rehearse it, memorize it and do it in front of a mirror. You'd just walk in and tell your friends, 'You wouldn't believe what this (bonehead) just said to me,' and you'd make your friends laugh.

"People over-analyze (comedic) riffing and think it is this amazing thing," continued Burr. "But, they don't understand that, dude, you riff all day. All day long you're riffing. You meet other human beings, you go in and you talk, you're feeling out their vibe and adjusting to them. But, standing on a stage and having everybody look at you; it is not a normal experience. They don't talk, only you talk. What happens is, it becomes this out-of-body experience and you become very self-conscious from the first time you go onstage. So, what you are working towards is to be onstage yet be as comfortable as you are if you were sitting in a bar with your friends. Then, you become uninhibited because you feel safe and amongst friends, and that is when you tell the story the best."

While coming up, Burr was influenced by comedians such as Richard Pryor, Sam Kinison, Colin Quinn, Bill Cosby, Jerry Seinfeld and Joan Rivers. However, he will also find ideas for his shows in everyday life while living amongst everyday people.



"I also get inspired by people who aren't comedians," said Burr. "My favorite kind of comedy is to be observing something that, if I was involved in the drama, it would not be funny to me. But, to stand back and observe it, it's hilarious. If two people have a fender bender and they're standing and they're yelling at each other, if you're one of the people in the car accident or your car was damaged and you have to go through insurance companies and stuff, that's not funny. That's a nightmare. But, if you're driving by and looking at it, and somebody is really heated, the look on their face, and they are not trying to be funny, but it is hilarious.

"That is the type of stuff that I gravitate towards if I'm acting or I'm doing standup because to me, that is real life," he added. "Later on that year, during the holidays when you take time to hang with your friends and you haven't seen each other and you start telling stories, you'll tell the story about, 'Oh yeah, I got in this fender bender with this (bonehead).' And, you start telling the story and everybody is laughing and you're laughing. But, when it was happening, it wasn't funny. You were dead serious. That's the type of stuff I like."

Burr grew up in the Northeast and has lived and worked in Los Angeles and New York City. But, he loves to travel to the smaller towns of America to perform.

"I love West Virginia, to be honest with you," said Burr. "I don't know why everybody gives it such a rough time. It's a beautiful state. And, there is a lot to be said about living in a so-called rural area, or in the middle of nowhere. I love those places. After living in cities where everybody is on top of each other, I like being able to drive down the street with your arm out the window. I'm a big time car guy, and I'm slowly getting into motorcycles. I went bow-fishing when I was in New Orleans, and I like that outdoor stuff.



"I like cities, too," he added. "But, cities beat you down a little bit, like you're six inches shorter if you stay in them too long. I felt like that in New York after a while. You're living on top of people with somebody underneath you, and you're smelling their food and hearing their arguments and stuff. You just want a little bit of peace and quiet, and maybe some trees between you and somebody else. Look, if I was at a point in this business where I didn't have to live out here, I could definitely live in a place like Montana, Wyoming or West Virginia. I had a great time in the South and loved it down there. Just having a driveway and not looking for a place to park, it's a high quality of life, which is why I like going out to those places. I like seeing them. I like the food. I like the people. I like the vibe. So, I'm excited to go to West Virginia. There, I said it; I'm excited to go to West Virginia."

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