

Dane Cook to bring comedy back to PSU

By Karina Yücel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Jean Shelton won the Bryce Jordan Center's "Tickets and a Meet & Greet with Dane Cook" impression contest Tuesday.

Shelton (sophomore-veterinary and biomedical sciences) is now taking her boyfriend to see Dane Cook at 7:30 tonight in the front row of the BJC.

Cook will perform on a circular stage in the middle of the audience to make sure everyone can see his performance and to play up his physical comedy, said Bernie Punt, marketing director for the BJC.

For this tour, Cook is going back to being more physical on stage.

"I love physical comedy," he said. "It's going to be raw and open and silly and ridiculous and over-the-top. When you're in the round, it feels like you're in front of four theaters."

He is one of very few artists who can pull off the center stage, Punt said, adding that the last person was Bill Cosby 10 years ago.

Cook won't be the only one to take the unique stage.

Al Del Bene, J. Chris Newberg and Ben Gleib will warm up the crowd. Cook said he is bringing these emerging comedians to give them a shot in the industry.

"That's how he started," Punt said.

"[Comedians] never forget their roots."

Cook started his tour Oct. 26 in Syracuse, N.Y., and the BJC will be the fifth stop on the new Dane Cook Live! tour.

Cook has been preparing for the tour for eight months and has his preparation down to a science, he said.

In the planning stages, Cook said he tries to come up with a conscious theme to stick to.

"You learn your lines and then you try to forget them," Cook said. "For bigger shows there's a bit more planning. You don't want to get distracted on stage, so I make a strong beginning and strong ending and know that in the middle I can improvise and freeform."

Shelton said she has been preparing a lot, too — for her meet and greet with the comedian.

"I don't want to be one of 'those' fans," she said. "I might just try to play it off or think of a funny joke."

Shelton said she has listened to and watched Cook since middle school, but has never seen him live.

For Cook, the first time he performed at Penn State was a turning point in his career — during his Tourgasm tour five years ago.

"Whenever someone brings up Penn [State] something happens to me, because I recall that moment standing backstage, and



Dane Cook will perform at 7:30 tonight in the BJC.

I was amazed that that many people had come to see me," Cook said. "It was my ultimate dream coming true."

Cook described the atmosphere at Penn State as a kick in the pants.

Punt said he also remembers Cook's show five years ago.

"We had the most people he had ever performed in front of," Punt said. "He was on a college tour performing in front of maybe 1,000 fans a night. Then he came here and saw 7,500 crazy, rabid Penn State fans."

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Chamber music trio to perform in Schwab

By Brittany Horn
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Five-lane traffic stood still as thousands gathered to listen and watch the concert, broadcasted on screens outside a concert hall in Vietnam, said Sara Sant Ambrogio, cellist of The Eroica Trio.

"We finish and just hear this roar outside from the people. It's so incredible that music has this power," Sant Ambrogio said.

She ran out of the concert hall during intermission to see the crowds, she said.

Sant Ambrogio is one of the Eroica Trio, which will perform at 7:30 tonight at the Schwab Auditorium.

The concert is part of the Center for the Performing Arts' seasonal line-up.

Student tickets are \$15 with a student ID.

The Eroica Trio will play a variety of pieces including one commissioned by Penn State, said John Mark Rafacz, CPAs editorial director.

The performance will feature the composition "Trio-Sinfonia" by Kevin Puts, a "massively talented" composer, Sant Ambrogio said.

"It tickles your fancy and makes you want to dance," Sant Ambrogio said.

While the group is known for classical chamber music, this

should be no reason to stop students from coming, Rafacz said. There may be a lot of chamber musicians, but these women are "new wave" and have had successful careers as soloists and ensemble members, he said.

When it comes to solo careers, all three are known for expansive backgrounds and credentials, Rafacz said. Sant Ambrogio and pianist Erika Nickrenz attended high school together and took lessons from the Sant Ambrogio family.

They grew together "like sisters" in the field of music and opportunity, Sant Ambrogio said.

Because the three members know each other so well, they have a strong "dynamic" of spontaneity and chemistry, Sant Ambrogio said.

Feeling is everything for the trio, Sant Ambrogio said — it's "raw, life-changing" music that they play and share with the world.

"Music is one of those few moments where there is no technology and interference," Sant Ambrogio said.

"It's live. It's real."

College students should find the group a lot more accessible than other musicians, as audience interaction can be expected, Rafacz said.

Not only are they first-rate musicians, but they're also "easy on the eyes," he said.

Bluegrass band to 'jam' at Theatre

By Josh Bollinger
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Don't be fooled by the name — Yonder Mountain String Band isn't your typical bluegrass band.

Yonder Mountain String Band will play at 8 tonight at the State Theatre. Tickets are \$30.

"It's kind of like rock, it's kind of like bluegrass," banjo player Dave Johnston said. "I think definitely by now it's just Yonder Mountain String Band music."

State Theatre Marketing and Membership Director Kristy Cyone said the band is classified as "newgrass." She said it is a jam band at heart, but it is unlike most jam bands today.

"It's not traditional bluegrass. It's like an updated jam band version," Cyone said.

Johnston said the band derives its influences from many different genres other than bluegrass, such as country and classic rock.

He said Yonder Mountain String Band is also influenced by punk band the Dead Kennedys' "do it yourself" work ethic.

But Johnston said the backbone of the band has always been bluegrass, though it's slowly evolved over time into something more.

"Mainly we're still an acoustic band. We're just pretty loud," he said.

But, he said, for the most part, its fans see the band as a group of

guys who are more or less a lot like them, having a great time playing a unique style of music.

"It's something they can relate to in a way they could never relate to before," Johnston said. "We don't represent that old way — we're just regular guys framed to the bluegrass contexts."

That's exactly how Ray Yeager (junior-information sciences and technology) sees the band.

Yeager said he likes that Yonder Mountain String Band plays classic bluegrass songs because his uncle used to play those songs when he was a kid and he's learned to love them.

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