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Comedian, actor Kevin Pollak to perform at Keith-Albee on Monday

DEREK HALSEY
For The Herald-Dispatch
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The Marshall Artist Series 2013-14 season continues tomorrow evening with an appearance by comedian, impressionist and actor Kevin Pollak at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center.

A veteran of the standup comedy circuit and the late night talk show scene, Pollak has also acted in more than 70 movies.

Pollak will perform at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 28. Tickets and more information can be found at 304-696-6656 or ticketmaster.com.

Comedians that do impressions are not as common as they were in the past. But while Pollak's comedy is about much more than impersonations, his takes on actors Christopher Walken and William Shatner still ring true for audiences. His movie career has also earned him some acclaim as he has acted in some hit movies over the years such as "A Few Good Men" and "The Usual Suspects." Both sides of his profession have added up to an interesting journey in show business.



"It's been pretty ridiculous, far beyond the outlandish dreams and expectations and wishes and hopes of a 10 year-old, back when it all began," said Pollak. "In fact, I wrote my first and only book about it, which came out earlier this year, called 'How I Slept My Way to the Middle.' If I can say anything about my career, it is that I have hung in there."

In the comedy world, the 1980s historically loomed large as far as the popularity of the art form. Due to the onset of cable TV and other factors, comedy clubs sprang up across America at a record pace then, with many mid-to-larger size cities hosting three to four clubs at once. Soon, however, the boom went bust. Pollak was along for that ride, and was one of the few talents that survived and thrived afterwards.

"I started just before what they now refer to as the Comedy Gold Rush or The Boom of the mid-1980s," said Pollak.

"I became sort of a touring pro, if you will, around 1982, and then I moved to Los Angeles in 1983. So, I saw it all sort of explode. As it is happening, you're not terribly aware of it until someone points out that comedy clubs have expanded from 50 to 350. You could make an actual living with no real credits, per se, just because they had an inventory problem with that many venues. Which is ultimately what killed the Gold Rush, and it is the same thing that killed Vaudeville way back in the day.

"Once the popularity kicks in and they expand the number of venues, they can't expand the number of performers that should be headlining those venues," continued Pollak. "Middle acts get moved up prematurely and suddenly you had emcees that were saying a few weeks ago, 'What would you like on your cheeseburger?' To live through that, and to be able to have a handsome career start during the time when the so-called Boom was occurring was damn lucky and fortunate. I had a lot of stage time, consequently, because of it and I would say that was the best part of that Gold Rush, which is the only way to make an act. So, that was pretty great."

Pollak has kept up with the times by hosting an internet program called Kevin Pollak's Chat Show, for more than five years. Last year, the comedian began producing another podcast called Talkin Walkin, a show where he imitates actor Christopher Walken throughout.

While classic comedic impressionism seems like a dying art these days, Pollak says that a certain TV show has kept it alive.



"Well, if you think about it, 'Saturday Night Live' has cornered the market for 38 years or so," he said. "There is not a show that goes by where they aren't finding an excuse to do celebrity impersonations, including most of your political figures. They will make up talk show premises, such as last week when they did a Lady GaGa talk show, and it was just another cue for people from the cast to come out and do their impersonations. So, I think it is kind of amazing that no other show featuring people who do great impersonations has been on television, but 'Saturday Night Live' has certainly been doing it every week for 38 years."

As for the select few celebrities that Pollak is known for impersonating, such as Walken and Shatner, he has had feedback and contact with them through the years.

"Oh yeah, they love it," said Pollak. "And, Alan Arkin and a few others as well. It is kind of a bizarre byproduct of the business. Part of my act is about meeting Shatner. I started doing just the impersonations, but then I lived through these first-hand anecdotal experiences of meeting these people. So now, that is really what the act has evolved into, as in sharing these stories of meeting Christopher Walken. Then, I get to do the impression of him within the story, but I also get to share real life situations about the fun and enjoyment of it."

If You Go:

WHAT: National act comedian and actor, Kevin Pollak, drops into the for an evening of comedy courtesy of The Marshall Artists Series.

WHERE: Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, 925 4th Ave., Huntington

WHEN: 7:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 28

HOW MUCH: Tickets are \$51 and \$35

GET TICKETS: 304-696-6656 or stopping by the Marshall Artists Series Box Office, located in the Joan C. Edwards Performing Arts Center from noon to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday on the Marshall University campus.

DID YOU KNOW? Named by Comedy Central as one of the Top 100 comedians of all time, Pollak has been performing stand up since age 10, and since landing his first role in George Lucas' "Willow," has been in many films.



CONTACT: Go online at www.marshallartistsseries.org for more info on the upcoming 2013-2014 Marshall Artists Series, and check out the Artists Series on Facebook and Twitter

ON DECK @ THE ARTISTS SERIES: Blue Man Group at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 12; Fall International Film Festival runs Friday, Nov. 15 through Thursday, Nov. 21; Blood Sweat and Tears a Holiday Celebration with Orchestra on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

Welcome to the discussion.

Keep it Clean. Please avoid obscene, vulgar, lewd, racist or sexually-oriented language.

PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CAPS LOCK.

Don't Threaten. Threats of harming another person will not be tolerated.

Be Truthful. Don't knowingly lie about anyone or anything.

Be Nice. No racism, sexism or any sort of -ism that is degrading to another person.

Be Proactive. Use the 'Report' link on each comment to let us know of abusive posts.

Share with Us. We'd love to hear eyewitness accounts, the history behind an article.



https://www.herald-dispatch.com/news/recent_news/gallery-kevin-pollak-hosts-an-evening-of-comedy-at-the-keith-albee/article_bb14ff79-a004-50f2-8708-7660eb1aed60.html

Gallery: Kevin Pollak hosts "An Evening of Comedy" at the Keith-Albee

Marcus Constantino
Herald-Dispatch.com
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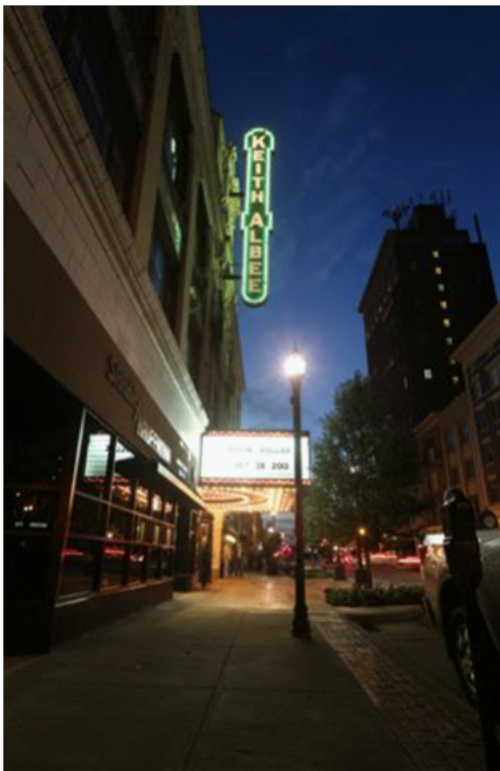


Stand-up comedian Kevin Pollak performs at the Keith-Albee Performing Arts Center, Monday, Oct. 28, 2013, in Huntington.

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Members of the audience react as stand-up comedian Kevin Pollak performs at the Keith Albee Performing Arts Center in Huntington on Monday, October 28, 2013, in Huntington.

