

## Mitch Hedberg, Anti-Comic

by Chris Martins

You don't forget Mitch Hedberg. That casual wit, that innocent giggle, that complete lack of onstage professionalism. Whether you remember him as the best worst standup comedian you've ever seen, or build monuments in his likeness to honor He Who is the Highest Arc of Subtle Comedic Genius to Date (we suggest the latter), you just don't forget Mitch—there's no one else like him around. And if Bob Saget is, like, some weird watered-down, wit-deficient Christ figure spreading lameness throughout the land, then Hedberg is the anti-comic: all long hair in his face, eyes on his shuffling shoes, sunglasses over his eyes, laughing at his own observational humor and messing up the delivery half the time. But that's why you know him. Like *know* him, know him. He's the shy kid in the back of the class who really *wants* to be social. Except Mitch is on stage. And he's fucking hilarious. *Filter Mini* sat down for some words with Mitch the day after his headlining show at Los Angeles' Wiltern theater.



**I've never heard people shout requests at a comedy show. Is that normal?**

It happens if I let it happen. Not all the time, but that night it happened pretty early. It's very flattering that people like certain jokes and ask for them, but it's kind of a buzzkill. Usually it happens in the last 15 minutes, which is okay with me, because then I can do my old material without looking like I need to. I can make it seem like the audience requested it [laughs].

**You know that really loud methead that kept finishing all of your jokes and yelling at you to smoke a bowl? Yeah, he was sitting right next to me and my girlfriend.**

Yeah. I get a lot of pot stuff during my shows. Smoke a bowl... that's kind of a ridiculous request—nothing like being arrested on stage! Hey that might've been alright though. I don't know if you remember the Van Halen video for "Jump," but they show David Lee Roth being arrested and it's the coolest thing ever, man. But no,

I'm not going to be smoking no bowls live on stage. That was just pipe tobacco. Besides, if you're going to ask someone to do something you kinda have to be the provider, don't you think?

**Good point. I've never seen so many young people in a comedy crowd either.**

A lot of people watch Comedy Central and I'm on there from time to time. It's great as long as it doesn't get too young. I remember when I got started, a guy that I knew did a show at a library in front of second graders. He asked me if I wanted to do a set, but I passed. The second graders—they don't tend to get the subtleties, but man they like the dick jokes.

**You sold 85,000 copies of *Mitch All Together* [live CD put out by Comedy Central]. That's impressive.**

Yeah, I'm very happy about that. If I was in, let's say, uh, um, Blink 182, I would be depressed at that figure. But I tell you, putting a CD in a store really makes a big difference. My mom used to package my CDs—I'd love to see her trying to do 85,000 orders. That would be fucking ridiculous.

**Are you a fan of standup comedy? Because you're kinda like the anti-comic.**

Yeah, well I mean I used to love it so much before I did it. But once you realize there are so many bad acts out there... My wife always says people who aren't good at architecture don't get into architecture—it's only the people who have a knack for it. But for some reason with comedy, lots of people who don't have a knack for it get into it. So it ruins it. But I think right now there's a great group of comics. The art form is by no means in danger.

**Do you get a lot of fans coming up to you with their own "Hedbergian" jokes?**

Oh yeah, yeah. A lot of people come up to me and they kinda talk like they think I talk, and they'll tell me a joke. They'll say, "Hey, I thought of a joke for you today." It's like, what do you mean for me, man? All it is the way you're talking. Just stop talking like that, and that joke is *for you*. **F**