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# 845SCENE

## Jon Stewart at Eisenhower Hall

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By **Robin A. Rothman**, Times Herald-Record

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If Jon Stewart is nervous about the four Emmys "The Daily Show" is up for Sunday, he's not showing it. Either that or his idea of unwinding is performing at a military academy in front of 4,500 people. What's more, he'll do so with no desk, no giant screens with punny headlines, no team of writers, no co-faux-reporters to throw to, no APPLAUSE sign and no way to edit out the flubs in post.

In short, 5-foot-7 to be exact, he'll be all alone at Eisenhower Hall tonight. There are rumors that he'll have a podium, but, contacted after many attempts, his publicity team refused to comment.

Count on this, however: Stewart's stand-up will bear the same irreverently political satirical edge as his award-winning, culturally pervasive show.

"THE DAILY SHOW" TOUTS ITSELF with sarcastic taglines like "When news breaks, we fix it" or "More people get their news from the Daily Show with Jon Stewart ... than probably should."

Ironically, both have become outrageous self-fulfilled prophecies. "The Most Important News Show ... Ever," eh, not so much. But, as it has surpassed the impact of fake news predecessors "Not Necessarily the News" on HBO and Weekend Update on "Saturday Night Live," its importance is undeniable.

On the one hand, "The Daily Show" has been recognized with five previous Emmy wins (out of seven nominations) for its achievements as a comedy show.

On the other hand, the Television Critics Association honored "The Daily Show" in 2004 for Outstanding Achievement in News and Information. In response to 2004 campaign coverage, the Columbia Journalism Review ranked Stewart and "The Daily Show" No. 4 out of 10 on "a short list of reporters who consistently rise above the superficial to do original and often insightful work."

New York Times columnist Frank Rich was No. 10.

Perhaps it's the combination of the two — comedy based on reality or reality given a comedic spin — that attracts viewers and especially guests. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Henry Kissinger, John Kerry, Bob Dole, Kurt Vonnegut, Tom Cruise, Ringo Starr and Paula Abdul have subjected themselves to Stewart's mocking commentary on the absurdities of American culture.

Newscasters Tom Brokaw, Brian Williams and Peter Jennings have appeared, all knowing full well that the show's largest target, of course, is always the American media.

Underestimating the underlying truth of Stewart's jokes, however, proved fatal to CNN's "Crossfire."

Appearing on the program on Oct. 14 last year, Stewart confronted hosts Tucker Carlson and Paul Begala, accusing them of "partisan hackery" and begging them to "stop, stop, stop, stop hurting America."

Tucker, not enjoying the lecture, suggested, "You need to get a job at a journalism school, I think." Stewart retorted, "You need to go to one."

The face-off became an instant legend. Streaming video was all over the Internet. And then all was quiet ... until three months later, when "Crossfire" was canceled.

Jonathan Klein, CNN chief executive, explained the decision in a statement to AP: "I guess I come down more firmly in the Jon Stewart camp."

On his show, Stewart quipped, "I had no idea that if you wanted a show canceled, all you had to do was say it out loud."

He should have known. After all, he's one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2005.

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IN THE SIX-AND-A-HALF YEARS since he took over "The Daily Show," Stewart has all but erased its early years from the history books. Few viewers even remember the Craig Kilborn era beyond the five questions he took with him when he left for "The Late Late Show."

Meanwhile, Stewart has catapulted the ratings and his own pop culture status.

But like so many comedians who've scored successful shows — Jay Leno, Jerry Seinfeld, Dave Chappelle — Stewart has never given up the comedy club stage entirely. He'll hit New York City clubs such as the Comedy Cellar occasionally, popping in unannounced for a quick set to try out material before putting it on the air.

Let "Crossfire" be a lesson. With great power comes great responsibility. Tonight, Hudson Valley, the fate of countless jokes lies in your laughs.

If you Go! ...

What: Jon Stewart

Where: Eisenhower Hall, West Point

When: 8 p.m. Sept. 16

Tickets: \$40

Call: 800-233-3123

Visit: [www.ikehall.com](http://www.ikehall.com)

Important moments in the Jon Stewart cultural oeuvre

By Germain Lussier

1962-87

Birth, childhood, college (William & Mary). Moves to New York to pursue stand-up comedy career.

1987-93

Experiences plenty of humiliation doing stand-up, but finally finds success opening for Sheena Easton in Las Vegas. Writes and stars in small shows for MTV and Comedy Central.

1993-95

Stars in "The Jon Stewart Show" on MTV.

1995-99

Scores guest hosting spots on "Tom Snyder" and "Larry Sanders," foreshadowing later success. Is featured in the little-seen movie "Playing by Heart." Gets cut out of several big Hollywood movies. Damn you, "First Wives Club!"

1998

Makes famous cameo as enhancement smoker in "Half Baked." Asks the key question, "Have you ever seen the back of a \$20 bill, ON WEED?"

1999

A big year. Publishes first book, "Naked Pictures of Famous People." Goes serious in the film "Big Daddy" in which he plays a drunken fornicator with a heart. Becomes host of "The Daily Show."

2002

Sports the worst haircut ever in "Death to Smoochy," playing Marion Frank Stokes, an evil television executive.

2004

Annihilates "Crossfire." Publishes "America (The Book): A Citizen's Guide to Democracy Inaction," which is promptly banned by Wal-Mart.

2005

Plays Eisenhower Hall. Go!

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