

CAN'T CONTAIN US!



HANCHER 

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John Oliver

Opening Performer: **Mike Lawrence**

Iowa Memorial Union

Saturday, January 28 7:30 pm

Iowa Center for the Arts
The University of Iowa

Connecting great artists with great audiences around the community and across the state.

Can't contain us!

Stew & The Negro Problem / February 2

Chucho Valdés and the Afro-Cuban Messengers / February 10

L.A. Theatre Works, *The Rivalry* / February 23

Tower of Power / March 2

Los Angeles Guitar Quartet / March 6

Lucky Plush Productions, *Punk Yankees* / March 8

Soweto Gospel Choir / March 27

Dave Pietro / April 5

Working Group Theatre, *Mayberry* / April 27-29

Enso String Quartet / May 4

The Gizmo Guys / May 20



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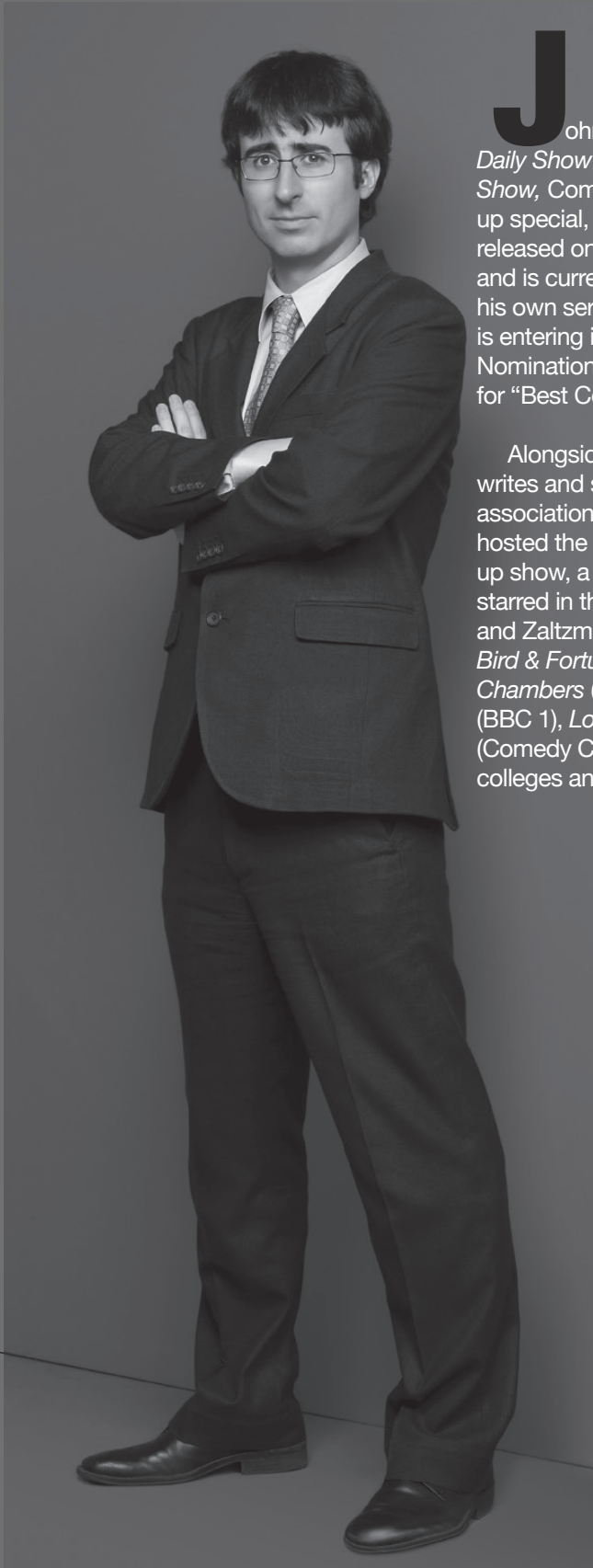
Chucho Valdés



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The Artist



John Oliver has been a writer and correspondent on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* since 2006. As a result of his popularity on *The Daily Show*, Comedy Central asked John to write and star in his own one hour stand-up special, *Terrifying Times*, which premiered in April 2008 and was subsequently released on DVD. In 2008 John starred in the Mike Myer's movie, *The Love Guru* and is currently appearing in a recurring role in the NBC series *Community* and in his own series for Comedy Central, John Oliver's *New York Stand-Up Show*, which is entering its third season in 2012. John has had multiple Writers Guild and Emmy Nomination for his writing on *The Daily Show* and in 2009 won the Emmy Award for "Best Comedy Writing in a Comedy or Variety Series."

Alongside long-term writing partner Andy Zaltzman, John currently co-writes and stars in *The Bugle*, an ongoing series of satirical news podcasts, in association with *The Times* newspaper. With Zaltzman, John has co-written and hosted the BBC Radio 4 show *Political Animal*. Based on their satirical live stand-up show, a third series was broadcast in 2009. John has additionally written and starred in three series of *The Department* (BBC Radio 4) alongside Chris Addison and Zaltzman. Further credits include *Mock the Week* (BBC Radio 2), *Bremner, Bird & Fortune* (Channel 4), *The Last Word* (More 4), *Green Wing* (Channel 4), *Chambers* (BBC 1), *People Like Us* (BBC 1), the Ardal O'Hanlon sitcom *My Hero* (BBC 1), *Love Guru* (Paramount Films), and *Important Things with Demetri Martin* (Comedy Central). John also regularly performs his stand-up comedy act at colleges and comedy venues throughout the United States. ♦

Hancher Education Update— Stew and Heidi Rodewald



PHOTO: JACOB YARROW

By Erin Donohue,
Hancher Education
Programming Director

The Hancher staff is fond of all the artists we present each year. Some are known for their virtuosic interpretations of classical music. Others are known for their grace and style on the dance floor.

And then, there are those with that unexplainable star quality. Stew and Heidi would fall into this category. It's not because of their Tony-award winning musical *Passing Strange*, the songs of which get stuck in your head for hours, and not because a certain filmmaker by the name of Spike Lee has produced a stunning film of the show. It's not because of their rock band, *Stew and the Negro Problem*, which has a long history of opening for people like Arthur Lee and played the opening night of the newly renovated legendary New York music club Joe's Pub. It's not even because they dress like rock stars (yes, Stew really wears yellow glasses all the time).

It's because they are truly brilliant artists who are constantly pushing the bounds of their work through their willingness to try new projects. And they don't really care if anyone likes it. We spent a significant amount of time prepping and planning for Stew and Heidi's visit. Hancher is commissioning them to write a group of songs about Iowa City for their February 2 concert, so we really wanted to show them what Iowa City is all about. We learned quickly that it's hard to squeeze in all the highlights of a community in only 48 hours.

This process of writing songs about a town that they're not familiar with is a relatively new exercise for the pair. Stew and Heidi have been working together since 1997, but their expertise is in rock and roll clubs, not performing arts centers. It became clear that we were best suited to be their expert tour guides, setting up some important exchanges with members of the community, but also helping them find the best (or funkiest) local hangs. While there are obvious distinguishing factors about Iowa City that jump out to the

average visitor (Hawkeye football, the Writers' Workshop), their creative process focused on connecting with the heart of Iowa City, discovering what the average citizen is a part of.

We wanted to give them a feel for the arts scene in Iowa City, which included attending a UI theatre class with Sydné Mahone and watching a work-in-progress reading of *Mayberry* with Sean Lewis and Working Group Theatre (WGT). Sydné was a dramaturg at the Sundance Institute when Stew and Heidi were working on *Passing Strange*. Stew noted on several occasions how Sydné changed his life and was thrilled to work with her again. The exchange with WGT was extremely useful for both groups—Stew learned about a different aspect of Iowa City through Sean's work while Sean received critical feedback from an artist he respects and was able to start revising his script. Stew and Heidi also learned more about the 2008 flood by meeting with flood expert Larry Weber and touring the old Hancher Auditorium building.

But there were other, possibly more important, activities, as well. Stew and Heidi wanted to experience Iowa City like any true Iowa Citian would. Eat breakfast at Hamburg Inn, complete with pie shake. Go shopping at John's Grocery and Kmart. See children play at Grant Wood Elementary and the Wetherby Splash pads. Buy a new book (or ten) at Prairie Lights. Check out the lore of the Black Angel in Oakland Cemetery. Shop for an "I Love Iowa City" t-shirt or something black and gold.

By the end of the week, I was worn out from visiting many of our local gems with the duo. It was a good reminder for me of all the culture and activity that exists in Iowa City, and of the changes that are taking place, as well. I can't imagine how Stew and Heidi could tackle this activity in much larger cities like Brooklyn or Los Angeles, but I'm excited to hear their take on Iowa City and what resonated with them during their short visit to our town. And now I have to wait until February to see if I make it into one of their songs.

Tickets are available for
Stew & The Negro Problem
Thursday, February 2, 7:30 pm
The Englert Theatre
335-1160 or www.hancher.uiowa.edu
Hancher Commission