

Sunday, October 15, 2006, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

Paula Poundstone



Cal Performances' 2006–2007 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

About the Artist

The Boston Globe says “she’s never been funnier.” Appearing on stage with a stool, a microphone and a can of Diet Pepsi, **Paula Poundstone** is delighting crowds around the country on her hilarious national tour. There’s a wonderful synergy to each one-of-a-kind two-hour show. Paula’s ability to create humor on the spot is legendary and, with her casual air, impeccable timing and razor-sharp wit, she improvises with a crowd like a jazz musician. She’ll find an audience member who sells grass seed to golf courses in part of the state of Maryland and wonder aloud if, in such a small territory, the grass seed were any good at all, the salesman could possibly be working to his full potential, then swing in another unexpected direction without a plan, without a net. Paula is so quick and unassuming that audience members leave complaining that their cheeks hurt from laughter and debating whether the random people she talked to were “plants.”

In addition to touring the country, Paula can be heard regularly on NPR’s oddly informative weekly news quiz show, *Wait Wait...Don’t Tell Me*. Paula’s new book, *There Is Nothing in This Book That I Meant to Say*, is due for release by Random House on November 7, 2006. With a foreword written by actress Mary Tyler Moore, the book is part memoir, part monologue, with a pinch of self-deprecation and a dash of startling honesty. This laugh-out-loud book features biographies of legendary historical figures from which Paula can’t help digressing to tell her own. Mining gold from the lives of Abraham Lincoln, Helen Keller, Charles Dickens, Joan of Arc, Sitting Bull and Beethoven, among others, Paula’s eccentric and inimitable mind dissects, observes and comments on the successes and failures of her own life with spot-on comedic timing. If you like Paula’s ironic and intelligent humor, you will love this book. To request an autographed book plate or to place a pre-order, visit www.paulapoundstone.com.

In May, Paula taped her new one-hour special for the Bravo Network, *Look What the Cat Dragged In*, which will air on November 7.

Paula recently appeared on *Late Night with David Letterman*, Garrison Keillor’s NPR radio program, *A Prairie Home Companion*, including his annual “Joke Show,” and *The Late Late Show* with Craig Ferguson. Her web site, www.paulapoundstone.com, features diary entries with pictures from Paula’s personal life and a special column, “Ask Paula to ask Hep Cat.” Paula’s cat, Hep, can speak (but only to Paula) with authority on a surprisingly wide array of topics, and what Hep doesn’t know she’s only too glad to try and find out. Paula, for example, asked Hep recently if she should use a “no stick” spray on a “no stick” pan and Hep replied, “no.”

Paula grew up in Sudbury, Massachusetts, and began performing at open-mic nights in 1979. She has made numerous appearances on both *The Tonight Show*, *Late Night with David Letterman* and *The Late Late Show* with Craig Ferguson. Paula served as a celebrity regular on the syndicated game show *To Tell the Truth* in 2000 and 2001. She voiced the character of Judge Stone on the acclaimed ABC-TV Saturday morning animated series *Science Court* (a.k.a. “Squigglevision”) for three years. She also guest starred on the CBS series *Cybill*, which led to a recurring role during the show’s final season. Paula has also appeared on PBS favorites such as *Sesame Street* and *Storytime*, and won a local Emmy Award for her field pieces on the series *Life & Times* for PBS station KCET.

In 1992, Paula was the first woman to win a Cable ACE Award for Best Stand-Up Comedy Special for her HBO special *Cats, Cops and Stuff*. In 1996, she debuted her second HBO stand-up special, *Paula Poundstone Goes to Harvard*, the only time the elite university has allowed its name to be used in the title of a television show. Paula was the first woman to headline the White House Correspondents’ Dinner, and she provided memorable live coverage of the 1992 political conventions and presidential inauguration for *The Tonight Show*. Her quick wit and spontaneity made her a perfect fit as backstage commentator for the 1993 Emmy

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Awards the following year. Paula starred in a self-titled series for HBO in 1992 (for which she won her second Cable ACE Award for Best Program Interviewer), moving the show to ABC in 1993. The series was short-lived but applauded for its break from convention. She has performed in almost every Comic Relief special since its inception and at Ford's Theater for President Clinton in 1994 and 1995 on ABC-TV's prestigious *A Gala for the President* specials.

Paula produced the award-winning children's audio book *Completely Yours*, and gave voice to a character alongside Mary Tyler Moore, Bea Arthur, Kathy Najimy, Ed Asner and Lily Tomlin. Released in 1997, the project featured a story about adoption, entitled *A Mother for Choco*, which is available through the

Children's Book of the Month Club and at selected bookstores.

While she has amassed an impressive list of accolades on stage and in print, Paula is a single parent with children ages 14, 11 and 8, nine cats, a big cat-eating dog, a bearded dragon lizard, an elderly bunny and one doggedly determined ant left from her ant farm. So the majority of her life is spent in Santa Monica, California wielding a damp cloth, lint lifting, denying junky snacks, watching steadily improving cartwheels, trying desperately to remember the parts of speech, correcting long division, listening to Nancy Drew read aloud, overcooking noodles and explaining that life isn't always fair, but that right now it's Thomas E.'s turn to use the pogo stick. She says things couldn't be better.