

Cal Performances Presents

Thursday, February 8, 2007, 8pm

Friday, February 9, 2007, 8pm

Zellerbach Hall

Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!



Photo by Tony Nagelmann

The Oddly Informative News Quiz from NPR

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

About the Artists

NPR's *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* takes a fast-paced, irreverent look at the news of the world—and the weird. Now in its eighth year, the show offers a modern and sometimes raucous twist on the old-time radio quiz show, mining NPR news stories for quiz questions. The host is Peter Sagal, who is an award-winning playwright and father of three in his spare time. Legendary NPR newscaster Carl Kasell is the show's official judge and scorekeeper.

Each week, Sagal quizzes the panelists and listeners to determine just how closely they paid attention to the week's news. He serves up questions in all forms: lightning rounds, tape from NPR news shows, multiple choice, identify the "fake" story and fill-in-the-blank limericks. Listeners call 888-WAIT-WAIT for a chance to win the most coveted prize in all of public radio: a custom-recorded greeting by Carl Kasell for their home's answering machine or voice mail.

One of the most popular segments is "Who's Carl This Time?" in which Mr. Kasell recites quotes from the week's newsmakers as contestants guess whom he is impersonating. "This is the only show where you'll get to hear NPR's most senior newscaster impersonate Britney Spears," the *Wait Wait* producers say. Another signature *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* game, "Not My Job," invites well-known celebrities to answer questions that are out—way out—of their area of expertise.

A rotating trio of witty panelists completes the *Wait Wait* team. They include author and humorist Roy Blount Jr., *Boston Globe* writer Charlie Pierce, *Washington Post* columnist Roxanne Roberts, writer/performer Adam Felber, BBC contributor Sue Ellicott, author P. J. O'Rourke, comedian Paula Poundstone and humorist/pundit Mo Rocca.

Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me! is a co-production of NPR and Chicago Public Radio. The program, created by the same folks who produce *Car Talk*, debuted nationally in 1998 and quickly established itself as one of public radio's favorite weekend programs.

Visit the show's web site at <http://waitwait.npr.org> to take the weekly news quiz, find out what newsmaker personality you most resemble or find a local station and broadcast time.

The People

In addition to their glamorous roles on NPR, the *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* gang count among their ranks popular authors, journalists, actors, magicians, newscasters and even an extra in a Michael Jackson video.

Peter Sagal (*host*) has had a varied career including stints as a stage director, an actor, an extra in a Michael Jackson video, a contestant on *Jeopardy*, a travel writer, an essayist, a ghost writer and a staff writer for a motorcycle magazine. He is the author of numerous plays that have been performed around the country and abroad.

Carl Kasell (*official judge and scorekeeper*) is an all-around genius and great guy. He has also been a newscaster for NPR's daily newsmagazine *Morning Edition* since its inception in 1979. His newscasts on *Morning Edition* can be heard at the top of the hour every weekday morning on public radio stations nationwide. A veteran broadcaster, Kasell launched his radio career more than 50 years ago. He sometimes moonlights as a magician.

Rod Abid (*senior producer*) came to NPR Washington in 1988, and began a long stint working with Bob Edwards through the night on *Morning Edition*. He rose to post of director. He also spent months on the road as one of NPR's foreign news producers; he's especially proud that he can say he spent three weeks in the former Yugoslavia with Sylvia Poggioli. He joined *Wait, Wait...Don't Tell Me!* as senior producer just two days after the Y2K fizzle. He says that working in war zones provided him with

About the Artists

the training he needed to produce *Wait, Wait... Don't Tell Me!* By the way, his given name is Murad, but all call him Rod.

Doug Berman (*executive producer*) is the Peabody Award-winning producer of NPR's *Car Talk* and *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* For the last 15 years, he's been on a one-man crusade to get NPR to lighten up. He was a news director at NPR member stations WFCR in Amherst, Massachusetts, and WBUR in Boston before giving up his legitimate career for this stuff.

Mike Danforth (*producer*) joined *Wait Wait... Don't Tell Me!* in November 2000, after a distinguished tenure at *Prairie Home Companion* in his home state of Minnesota. His first week was spent weeding through numerous hanging chad jokes to find the best ones. He also tutors the staff in Foley-like vocal sound effects. And does not look like Andy Dick. At all.

Lorna White (*NPR Chicago Bureau engineer*) began working at NPR in 1984. She engineered most of the NPR network programs, including *All Things Considered*, *Performance Today* and *Morning Edition*, where she became the first technical director to yell at Rod Abid. Being hopelessly Midwestern, she moved from Washington to NPR's bureau in Chicago in 1996. A year later, a guy named David Greene knocked on the door and in a matter of weeks, *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* was on the air. Two years later, David left to work on a public radio show about cars. Thankfully, Rod was willing to work with her, and she hasn't yelled at him since. When not working on *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!*, Lorna's day job includes managing audio production at the NPR bureau.

After many years spent as an award-winning theatrical sound designer and audio theater producer, **Robert Neuhaus** (*technical director*) went in search of even larger egos than the theater can contain and found them at *Wait Wait...Don't*

Tell Me! Robert has served as a recording engineer based in NPR's Chicago Bureau since 1988, but he still moonlights from time to time creating storms and battles for Chicago Shakespeare Theater.

We can only assume, when **Emily Ecton** (*assistant producer*) was standing on the White House lawn, dressed in a six-foot high Arthur (the PBS Aardvark) costume helping Lynne Cheney preside over the Easter Egg roll, she must have said to herself, "Life can get no better than this." But she was wrong! Soon after, she left the exciting world of PBS Media Relations and moved herself, her strangely squished-looking car and her dog, Binky, out to Chicago to join *Wait Wait*, where she serves as the Official Reality Television Expert.

The Panelists

Roy Blount Jr. is the author of 19 books, most recently, *Feet on the Street: Rambles Around New Orleans*. He's a columnist for *The Oxford American* and the editor of *Roy Blount's Book of Southern Humor*. Reared in Decatur, Georgia, he now lives in western Massachusetts.

Tom Bodett is an author and radio anomaly. He left a promising career building houses to become a writer and subsequently a commentator on *All Things Considered*. Bodett lived in Alaska for 25 years, is the author of seven books and has written for *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Redbook* and, lately, the *Dummerston Views* in Windham County, Vermont. His voice has been heard on *Saturday Night Live*, *National Geographic Explorer* and Steven Spielberg's *Animaniacs*, and can still be heard in some people's faulty dental work saying "We'll leave the light on for you" about a 110 times a day.

Amy Dickinson writes the syndicated advice column "Ask Amy" for *The Chicago Tribune*,

About the Artists

following in the footsteps of the legendary Ann Landers. She has also written for *Time*, *Esquire* and *O* magazines. She has contributed radio stories to NPR programs for the past 10 years, and was an original “cast member” for the pilot of *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* in 1998; ultimately she was offered a job Roxanne Roberts's radio stunt double.

Sue Ellicott divides her time between the United States and London, and would love it during the next public radio pledge drive if an airline would agree to upgrade her on every flight. Sue is a freelance writer, radio journalist, and contributor to ABC News, the BBC and other American and British media. She will consider working for food. But she's picky.

Adam Felber writes and performs for screens of all sizes and resolutions, and spends almost every night on some stage or another. He comprises exactly one half of the Irwin Smalls Trio, a sketch comedy duo. His writing credits include PBS's *Wishbone* and MTV's new *Spy Groove*. His first screenplay, *Women Are From*, is currently in development at Paramount/MTV Films. Felber has been improvising comedy all over the world for the past 15 years, but he can quit any time he wants to.

Aamer Haleem is a host on VH1. The shows he has hosted include *Bands Reunited*, *Top 20 Countdown* and VH1's Grammy Awards red-carpet specials. He enjoys singing at the top of his lungs, placing orders in restaurants, hockey and songs with a good bass line.

Kyrie O'Connor is deputy managing editor/features at the *Houston Chronicle* and writer of the daily blog MeMo on the *Houston Chronicle* website. Before becoming a Texan by choice in 2003, she was assistant managing editor/features at *The Hartford Courant* in Connecticut. Her articles and book reviews have appeared in newspapers nationwide and in *Commonweal*

magazine. She devotes her time to tending an epileptic 120-lb. chocolate Lab, supporting a bad soy latte jones and downloading transgressive ringtones onto her celly. She is aesthetically but not morally opposed to the inside-out Reese's peanut butter cup.

P. J. O'Rourke is a correspondent for *The Weekly Standard*. He has been a journalist for 36 years and has covered news events in more than 40 countries. O'Rourke is also a regular contributor to *The Atlantic Monthly*. He is the author of 11 books, including *Parliament of Whores*, *Eat the Rich* and, most recently, *Peace Kills*. He was editor-in-chief of *National Lampoon* from 1978 to 1981, and international affairs correspondent for *Rolling Stone* from 1985 to 2001.

Charlie Pierce is a staff writer for *The Boston Globe Magazine* and a contributing editor to *Esquire*. He is a regular on NPR and WBUR's *Only a Game*. His book, *Ever to Play the Game: Tom Brady and the Pursuit of Everything*, will be published next fall by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Paula Poundstone, often appearing on stage with a stool, a microphone and a can of Diet Pepsi, is famous for her spontaneous wit and off-kilter humor. This year Crown will publish her first book. Paula performs regularly across the country. She has earned two Cable ACE Awards, an Emmy and the American Comedy Award for Best Female Stand-Up. All that said, she spends the bulk of her time with her children in Santa Monica, California, where she denies junky snacks, tries desperately to remember the parts of speech and explains 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. She maintains a successful web site, paulapoundstone.com.

Roxanne Roberts has a job we all envy. As the writer of the “Out and About” column in

About the Artists

The Washington Post, she goes to fabulous parties and writes about them. She's *Wait Wait's* Washington insider and the show's most prolific champion.

Mo Rocca is a contributor to NBC's *Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. A former correspondent for *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* and host of Bravo's *Things I Hate About You*, he appears frequently on VH1's *I Love...* series, MSNBC's *Countdown with Keith Olbermann*, CNN's *Larry King Live* and as a judge on *Iron Chef America*. He's the host of Animal Planet's *Whoa! Sunday*. Recently, he wowed audiences in a small but pivotal role in Telemundo's hit telenovela, *Amor Descarado*. His book, *All the Presidents' Pets*

(allthepresidentspets.com), blows the lid off the White House's deepest, darkest secrets.

Richard Roper is co-host of the nationally syndicated *Ebert & Roper* and a daily columnist for *The Chicago Sun-Times* and the New York Times Syndicate. Roper regularly contributes to *Esquire* magazine, and his work has appeared in *Playboy*, *Spy*, *Chicago*, *Glamour* and *Entertainment Weekly*. He also has appeared on *The Tonight Show*, *Oprah*, *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*, *Live with Regis & Kelly*, *Nightline* and other national programs. He is the author of two books on movies and two books on urban legends. Roper is a native of Chicago's south suburbs and lives in Chicago.