

By John Nemo

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The lights inside the Orpheum Theatre went down and there he was, peeking around the corner from behind a curtain. As the spotlight illuminated him, Jerry Seinfeld walked onto the stage slowly, letting the crowd of 2,500 give him a standing ovation.

The man who spent nine years on NBC doing a show about nothing couldn't say anything for nearly a minute as the crowd drowned him out with cheers before his second show on Friday night. Finally, Seinfeld was allowed to speak.

"So," he said, sounding like a gunslinger ready for battle. "We meet again."

Seinfeld, 48, never met a stand up gig he didn't like, and that's why he's back on the road, touring America and more popular than ever. All four of his weekend shows at the Orpheum were sold out, and the display he put on Friday demonstrated why.

Seinfeld riffed for nearly 90 minutes on everything from the Taliban ("When I first heard that word, I thought it was the quit smoking people") to babies ("Make no mistake about why babies are here. They've come to replace us.") using the understated delivery that has made him a comedy legend.

While his scripted material was plenty funny, Seinfeld was at his best when the crowd threw him a curveball. In the middle of a bit about the problems men have with commitment, a woman in the front row yelled out, "That's my boyfriend!"

When Seinfeld asked how long they had been dating, the woman said seven months. Seinfeld cracked a smile as the audience groaned.

"Seven months? Well come on, buddy, what's the problem?" Seinfeld asked as the crowd roared. "Now, you want this man to marry you, correct? Do you really think that shouting about it in front of all these people is going to help your situation? Whatever pressure he was already under, it's just been multiplied by about three thousand people!"

When the woman continued to shout and interrupt Seinfeld, he poked fun at her a while longer, at one point asking her boyfriend, "So you've been dating this woman for seven months? I don't know who's dumber, you or her."

With the woman beginning to become annoying and the crowd a bit restless, Seinfeld simply waved her off and told her to shut up. She did, and the crowd cheered with delight.

"You've heard of fifteen minutes of fame," he told her. "Well, that was about five seconds."

The rest of the show demonstrated Seinfeld's ability to find the funny in just about anything people do. It ranged from watching cable news ("You've got the people on the screen, the ticker moving across the bottom, the thing going in the corner – what do you want me to watch?") to shoe bomber Richard Reid ("He announced that he acted alone. What a surprise! Come on everyone, I'm going to do it! Exploding shoes! No, I'm going to do it right now. I mean it!") to having children ("Why would you want to create someone who will stand in the aisle of a grocery store and scream hysterically because they have Pop Tarts?").

Although the show began to drag a bit in the middle, the episode with the heckling woman perked everyone up, including Seinfeld. You could see him welcome the challenge, handling it like the seasoned pro he is. After that, the laughs did not stop until he finally walked off the stage for good after a ten-minute encore.

And when he left, Jerry Seinfeld did not peek around the corner. He simply walked away, satisfied he'd met his crowd's expectations yet again.

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INFO BOX

Who: Jerry Seinfeld

Where: Orpheum

When: Friday-Saturday

Review: He's still the master of the stand-up domain.