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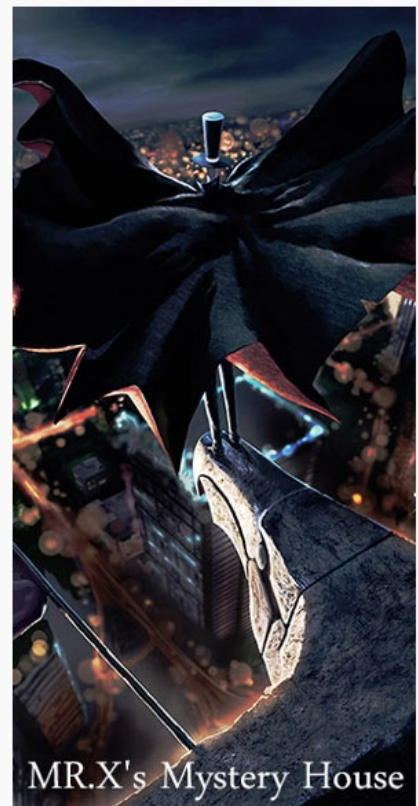
## Comedy King Paul Ogata - Back in Shanghai this Friday!



14 Apr 2014 / City / Emily Wetzki / [SHARE](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#)

Kung Fu Komedy, the people who introduced the riotous **Butch Bradley** as a regular fixture to the Shanghai comedy scene are bringing another of their favorite acts to town, the internationally acclaimed Paul Ogata.

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Paul was born in Hawaii but is actually Japanese American. He did a few shows here in 2012 and is now satisfying his urge to get back to China. He has an impressive biography; he was named Funniest Asian American comedian in the US a few years back and also won the San Francisco International Comedy Competition in 2007. He's also not bad on camera having starred on Comedy Central, Comics Unleashed and CBS's Late Late Show.

We caught up with Paul to talk about his return to the 'Hai and to find out what we can look forward to from his two upcoming shows – both at Kung Fu Comedy Club this Friday and Saturday.

***How would you describe your comic style? What sets you apart from other comedians?***

I'm like a vigilante ombudsman, a self-appointed investigator of complaints, making the world a better place one gripe at a time.

When I was a kid, I had just one friend and he moved away in the 4th Grade. So I had to use my imagination more and for a lot longer than the other kids.

***You're a Japanese American by way of Hawaii. Where do you feel you belong?***

I'm Japanese in appearance and American in circumstance, but Hawaii is in my heart. With its rich collection of all kinds of humans from everywhere in the world, Hawaii has probably influenced me more than any other place. The way everyone there is able to take the cross-cultural ribbing as good as they dish it out is inspiring and amazing.

***Have you ever regretted a sketch you've done?***

It's only the jokes or bits I *haven't* done that I regret. If I do a joke and it works, that's a victory. If it doesn't work, then I've learned from it and that's still a victory. But if I come up with a joke and just sit on it, debating whether to use it or not, then it becomes stifled creativity and a wasted thought. And I'm in the creative thoughts business, so that's not good.

***Do you prefer improvisation or planning your routine?***

There are things I know I want to talk about, but very often there are situations that arise which demand my attention and so I stray from the prepared material. And those are the best times, when nobody knows what's going to happen, including me. One time a rat ran over the feet of a woman in the front row. She screamed several times and pulled her legs up. If I don't address that, and simply plow ahead with my material, the audience loses faith in me. "Is he just going to pretend that he didn't see that lady jump on a chair?"

***Tell That's readers about your favorite part of your career to date.***

I've been aboard stealth bombers, been made an honorary State Senator and had women flash me while on stage but my favorite moment so far was the time I made a woman laugh so much that she simultaneously vomited and wet herself. I am the Ebola of comedy.

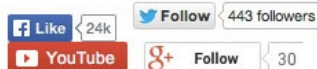
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***How did it feel to win the San Francisco International Comedy Competition?***

I have a theory about comedy competitions (<http://www.paulogata.com/2013/comedy-competitions/>) that these things are inherently flawed because you can't put a number to art. Having said that, it was wonderful to win such a storied and legendary contest. It was a validation for all the hard work I'd put in.

***Do you feel pressure to keep up with other stand-up acts by being controversial or have you always stuck to your own agenda?***

Controversy for controversy's sake seems shallow, and audiences would see through that, I hope. You're always going to ruffle someone's feathers in a crowd, otherwise you're doing comedy wrong. But I'm not going to go out of my way to do September 11 jokes at a New York Police Department function.

***You've appeared on many great comedy television programmes and channels (Comedy Central, Comics Unleashed and CBS's Late Late Show to name a few). Is having a presence on television important to you?***

Television and movie appearances are the driving factor for getting people to come to shows, so in that respect they are important. Oddly, watching comedy on television is nothing at all like seeing a live comedy show. The energy is crackling and the air is thick with anticipation. So TV is important, but being up there in front of people is more important to me, just that one is the means to the other's end.

***Do you ever use your comic talent to get yourself out of difficult situations or just to get you into them?!***

Twice, I was able to get out of traffic stops by making the police officer laugh. Other than that, it usually works against me in life.

***What can we expect from your upcoming shows in China?***

Expect to do your part for the show. This thing isn't just me on stage, you can just download comedy and listen to that, if that's what you want. In the best of all worlds, the audience and I collaborate to come up with the best show. I'll joke; you laugh. I ask; you answer. We're a team! So if it sucks, this is on you, too.

***Can you remember what you observed from the last ones you did?***

At one show about 10 mainland Chinese sat right in the front row. They couldn't understand any English. They could only speak Mandarin. Loudly, as it turns out, amongst each other. So my hope for this time is that everyone there has learned to understand and speak English. Because I've kind of slacked off on learning Mandarin.

// RMB170 presale, RMB200 on the door, 8pm, April 18, 8pm & 10pm April 19, 5F, 219 Jinxian Lu, near Shaanxi Nan Lu, 上海市黄浦区进贤路219号5楼近陕西南路, [www.kungfukomedy.com/paul-ogata-2014/](http://www.kungfukomedy.com/paul-ogata-2014/)



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