

# Ridley: Making it on adult humor

By Michelle Michael  
special writer

When Mike Ridley performs, he tends to keep a straight face. But don't think his somber stare fools an audience.

Just as Ridley winds up a legitimate "American Pie," fans expect an attitude check, one of the comedian's off-color trademarks that usually leads into a dirty ditty.

In song, Ridley reveals his reason for his special love in "Rubber Doll" and talks about baseball's foul play and misfortunes in "Ain't It a Shame" — singles that radio stations WHF and WDFX spin regularly.

He classifies his act as "bar material," adult humor that he performs in local pubs, colleges and comedy clubs, including the Comedy Castle in Royal Oak, owned by older brother Mark.

"When I go to the Comedy Castle, I do clean stuff," said Ridley, 37. In bars, it's another story.

"You get 99.9 percent of the peo-

ple gung ho and a couple walk out," said Ridley, who would rather see people offended by his material than bored from it.

Although "Birth Control to Mayor Young" and "Fairway to Heaven" are other parodies often plucked from his acoustic guitar, Ridley is serious about straight music.

"I'M MORE OF a musician than a comedian," Ridley said.

Ridley is cutting his first album with R&A Records, a half live, half studio recording. R & A is the same label for Ridley's "Rubber Doll" and "Ain't It a Shame" singles.

Ridley said "a lot of comedy and a lot of songs that lend themselves well to group participation" will be recorded.

"The important thing about the songs is that everybody gets involved," local bars, The Four Greenfields in Royal Oak and Joe's and Jill's in Trenton, are the live recording sites. The album's expected release date is May.

His true musical passion is "tongue-in-cheek country." Ridley said his country has a jazz feel that parallels Jimmy Buffet without imitating him.

"It's a cardinal sin ... to use someone else's (material)," Ridley said.

The Northern Michigan University graduate is slowly pursuing a master's degree at Wayne State University in addition to finishing a suspense drama novel.

Ridley taught physical education in Walled Lake before dipping into comedy — primarily in small bars in northern Michigan.

"I always knew in the back of my mind I wanted to give it a shot," he said. "I'd play just about anywhere back then."

NOW, HE ALSO caters to college groups, on and off campus, substituting lyrics for an alma mater shouted from the crowd, often poking fun at the school's stereotype. Ridley also takes requests, and is surprised at

selections like Jim Croce and James Taylor.

"College crowds are so into the things now that I was into," he said. Ridley wants to shift his act exclusively to clubs and colleges, his latest college appearance was at Oakland University in Rochester.

"I don't want to do bars," Ridley said. "Bars have been my bread and butter ... (but) clubs are easier on you."

Bar work requires setting up and tearing down equipment and putting up with sometimes four hours of a smoke-filled environment, whereas club acts are shorter with less or no set up time.

Although Ridley is getting more and more jobs in clubs and universities, including Michigan State University and the University of Michigan-Dearborn, he and his wife sometimes would like to get away from it all.

There's days that we say "Let's just sell everything and move up north."



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## COMEDY CLUBS

Here are some listings of comedy clubs in our area. To let us know who is appearing at your club, send the information to: Comedy Listings, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

• **Bea's Comedy Kitchen**  
Jeff Brannan, Mark Still and Bruce Phillips will perform Friday-Saturday, Feb. 23-24, at Bea's Comedy Kitchen, 541 Larned, Detroit. Show times are 8:30 and 11 p.m. For information, call 981-2581.

• **Chaplain's East**  
Willie Tyler and Lester will perform along with David Klela and

Mario Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 21-24, at Chaplain's East, 34244 Groesbeck, Fraser. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 792-1902.

• **Chaplain's West**  
Ther Vidal, along with John Campbell and Steve Mitchell, will perform Tuesday-Saturday, Feb. 20-24, at Chaplain's West, 16890 Telegraph, south of Six Mile, Detroit. For information, call 533-8866.

• **Comedy Castle**  
Jim Carrey will perform along with Jill Washburn on Tuesday

through Saturday, Feb. 20-24, at the Comedy Castle, 269 E. Fourth, Royal Oak. For reservations, call 542-9900.

• **Mainstreet**  
Michael Casper will perform Friday-Saturday, Feb. 23-24, at Mainstreet Comedy Showcase, 314 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 and 11 p.m. Friday and 7, 9 and 11 p.m. Saturday. For information, call 996-9080.

• **Joey's Livonia**  
Six Johnson Theatre will perform along with Mark Still and Steve Brewer Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 21-24, at Joey's Comedy Club, 36071

Plymouth, east of Levan, Livonia. Show times are 9 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Saturday. For reservations, call 261-0555.

• **Joey's Allen Park**  
Darwin Hines will perform along with Steve Billetter and Stacey DeFour Wednesday-Saturday, Feb. 21-24, at Joey's Comedy Club and Sports Emporium, Southfield Road, Allen Park. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and 8 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 382-7041.

• **Holly Hotel**  
Harry Milke will perform along with Jenale McNulty and Marc Sanford will perform Thursday through Saturday, Feb. 22-24, at Holly Hotel, 110 Battle Alley, Holly. Show times are 8:30 p.m. Thursday and 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For information, call 634-1891.

• **Looney Bin Too**  
Tim Lilly will perform on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 23-24, at The Roxy Looney Bin Too, 11175 Haggerty, Belleville. For reservations, call 699-1829.

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			Ringside Ends (Rows 1-9)	\$475	
7:30 P.M.	Wednesday	March 21, 1990	Ringside (Rows 1-9)	\$700	\$475
Evening	Thursday	March 22, 1990	Reserved (Rows 10-18)	\$600	\$475
	Wednesday	March 28, 1990	Ringside Ends (Rows 1-9)	\$475	
1:30 P.M.	Sunday	April 1, 1990	Ringside (Rows 1-9)	\$700	\$475
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