

Chris Rock Recycles...Jokes

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IT WAS FUNNY ONCE; IT WAS FUNNY TWICE

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If you've ever seen Chris Rock's show before, you've seen Chris Rock's show.

The talented, energetic comedian brought his rapid-fire jokes with his "Bigger & Blacker" tour to Richmond's Landmark Theater last night, and tree huggers would be proud of him.

He recycles.

Oh, he's still funny. In fact, hilarious. But you'll catch yourself finishing a few punch lines. (You don't pay taxes; they're taken.)

Grant it, he'll polish up a joke from his 1991 tour (women know from the moment they meet you whether or not they'll have sex with you), update it and make the audience howl. But to a true stand-up fan, it's like watching the end of a great movie - again.

Rock even ended his set the same way he did the last time he performed at the Landmark in 1997 - with a joke about how women talk too much and don't give men a chance to collect themselves after a hard day's work. Funny joke. But the same joke.

For an extra chuckle, he momentarily resurrected his early character from the movie "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka," in which he begged for a single rib because he couldn't afford the entire meal.

No doubt a tremendous talent, the HBO regular peppered the audience with his opinion on everything from the student killings at Columbine (which he blames on bad parenting) to President Clinton's marital woes (which he blames on the first lady).

He threw in relationship advice: "Women need food, water, compliments and an occasional pair of shoes." But men, he said, survive on "food, sex and silence."

Running all over the stage, gesturing, making strange faces and changing his voice, several times Rock belted out the hit Ricky Martin song "Living la Vida Loca." Pacing, whispering, dancing and pointing into the audience, he touched on a myriad of topics.

Race relations: It doesn't make sense to be racist; whoever you hate will end up in your family.

Gays in the military: Let 'em fight. I'm not shooting anybody. I don't care if a Russian tank is rolling down I-95.

New albums from the slain rapper Tupac Shakur: Maybe they buried him in the studio. Or sprinkled his ashes on the mixing board.

Hard-to-end relationships: Sometimes she won't accept your resignation.

Healthcare: AIDS isn't going to be cured. Why? "They can't cure athlete's foot."

Opening for the former Saturday Night Live was veteran comic Mario Joyner, who told a heckler, "This is not an interactive show."

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