

JOHN FUGELSANG
Biography

Whether on stage or in front of the camera, John Fugelsang's intelligent wit and charismatic appeal have earned him critical acclaim, high accolades, and above all, a busy schedule.

From hosting "America's Funniest Home Videos" and a myriad of VH1 specials, to performing his award-winning one-man show, "Junk Mate," Fugelsang's natural talent and versatility are recognized and appreciated across multiple entertainment mediums.

Appearing on ABC's revamped "America's Funniest Home Videos" since December 1997; Fugelsang joins co-host Daisy Fuentes in bringing a fresh, hip style to the nine-year-old show.

"I still feel like this skinny kid from Long Island next to this glamorous supermodel," says Fugelsang, whose raw sense of humor and polished style serve to enhance the show's new format. "Daisy's idea of a good time on Friday night is chartering a jet to Milan and doing runway. I get a happy meal, a six-pack of Zima, go home, and crank call my ex-girlfriend."

While Fugelsang successfully reincarnates "America's Funniest Home Videos" in Los Angeles, he also contributes his talents part-time to the New York-based network VH1, where he has worked since 1995.

Some of his credits there include moderating "Town Hall" specials with Paul McCartney (a career highlight), and Garth Brooks, as well as hosting "VHI Archives." He also hosts and serves as a co-writer for "American Classic," the highest-rated program on VH1 UK.

Fugelsang, who has chatted with numerous rock legends like Bruce Springsteen and The Beatles' George Harrison ("I got him to laugh at a Rick Astley joke"), however, does have a few professional boundaries. "I've always said I would set myself on fire before interviewing Michael Bolton," he says. "I did, however, acquiesce to David Hasselhoff. I'm part German."

In fact, it was his unabashed jokes, slights against the older Bolton-laden VH1 and a caustic affinity for the music industry evidenced in his one-man show, "Junk Male," that landed him a job with the popular music video network.

"Ironically, someone from VH1 came to my show, heard me trashing their old format, and then offered me a job." A cleverly crafted showcase of stand-up bits, character dialogues and one-man sketches, "Junk Male" earned him more than a regular paycheck.

In addition to receiving the 1997 Manhattan Association of Cabaret and Clubs (MACC) award for outstanding New York monologist at Lincoln Center, Fugelsang garnered the 1996 Backstage Bistro award for Outstanding Comedian and the 1995 MACC award for New York Male Cabaret Debut. "By performing in a cabaret as opposed to seven minute slots at Chucklehead's Yuk Hut for abusive drunks, I realized I could get critics and industry honchos to come see me do more of an acting showcase," says Fugelsang, who retired his original show after a successful four-year run.

Born and raised on Long Island, Fugelsang realized his passion for the arts at a young age. Although his first role was playing the scarecrow in his elementary school's production of "The Wizard of Oz," he made his professional debut in regional theatre and appeared in "Hamlet" when he was just twelve years old. "That was when my life switched from black and white to color."

Graduating early from high school, Fugelsang spent two years studying drama at NYU's Circle in the Square Theatre program before transferring into the university's film school. After earning his degree, he remained in New York for the next four years where he hit the comedy club circuit until he achieved overwhelming success with "Junk Male."

Fugelsang's regional and New York theatre acting credits include "Blue Window," "Savage in Limbo," "The Misanthrope," "Pirates of Penzeance," and "West Side Story."

Although Fugelsang continues to spread his comedic wings with the development of a new, autobiographical one-man show (he's the child of an ex-nun and ex-Franciscan monk), he remains serious about his plans for the future.

"I would love to perform anything by Shakespeare," says Fugelsang, who hopes to return soon to the dramatic stage. "My goal is to someday break into Shakespeare in the Park."