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Dennis Miller returns to his first act: stand-up

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At age 63, Dennis Miller said he's hopped on a bunch of lily pads in his life, including being a talk show host, sports commentator, actor, author, "Saturday Night Live" cast member, Emmy Award winner and regular contributor to the O'Reilly Factor.

"I've been lucky in show business. I never saw the far shore. I was looking for the next lily pad. I've had a lot of jobs, and I can hop to the next lily pad quickly," he said.

But the lily pad he likely enjoys the most is doing stand-up comedy, which he'll bring to Genesee Theatre on March 23.

"Stand-up is the thing I did first, the thing I'm most adroit at," Miller said. "It's like being the swallows going back to Capistrano."

He also likes being his own boss, and stand-up gives him the greatest chance to do that.

"My main mandate for the hour or so I'm up there is to get laughs. I talk about life in general and politics and perception. It's all under the umbrella of trying to get people to laugh their ass off."

Many of those laughs come from Miller's reference to current politicians, and though he might be considered more of a right-winger than a liberal by some, Miller said that's just not true.

"When I was on "Saturday Night Live," I went after Reagan. I have that (kind of) job. You make fun of the powers that be. The only times I've noticed in my adult life of comedians not making fun of the man in charge was (the Obama years). It seemed like they were loath to take him on," he said.

Miller has not been loath to take on the country's education system, which he has called "crap" on The O'Reilly Factor. He's also comfortable professing his disdain for former presidential candidate John Kasich.

Miller said he has liberal and conservative viewpoints. He supports gay marriage. But, he added, "I like to have money. I try to take out people who I think are insincere. Sometimes they're on the left and sometimes they're on the right."

Miller said there isn't some looming lily pad he hasn't hopped on yet.

"At 63, I'm sated. I want to read more great books. I like hiking. I watch Turner Classic movies. I'd love to see the pyramids, although the tourist industry is a bit dangerous now."

Right now, he's reading "Sister Carrie," which he said is a masterwork, and "The Twelve Days Pearl Harbor."

"I try to read one book that's fiction and one that's nonfiction."

When it comes to comedy, he said, he knows what the audience doesn't want.

"They don't want to be lectured," he said. "The reason people buy tickets should be to get entertained and be able to divorce themselves from day-to-day life."