



GREG SHAPIRO presents Leaving Trumpland on tour



Every serious comedian – I mean the ones with something relevant to say, not those that are not funny – must rub their hands with glee when someone like Donald J. Trump – or even Boris Johnson – appears on the world stage. Love ‘em or loath ‘em, they are both larger-than-life characters and provide unlimited grist to the comedians’ mill.

Greg Shapiro is an American comedian who has been in Amsterdam and fully assimilated into the Dutch way of life for over twenty five years. But like any ex-pat, the ties that bind can never be fully severed and you can feel his pain and anger at his homeland being brought to its knees by a president who it impossible to respect and easy to despise and deride. And Shapiro has his own personal axe to grind. His stepfather was killed by Covid 19 due, Shapiro believes, to the unwillingness or ineptitude of the Trump administration in taking the pandemic seriously.

Shapiro has dined out, professionally, on Trump for more than four years, providing the President’s voice in various venues and scenarios and lampooning him in his numerous stand-up routines. But now with only a short time before, hopefully, Trump is ousted, Shapiro is shedding the voice and the jokes and hopefully, along with the rest of the world, moving on to pastures new. So he and all of us, with any luck, will be leaving Trumpland.

This tour is, perhaps optimistically, a pre-celebration of Trump’s demise but has been slightly compromised by the CoronaVirus restrictions – a thirty strong audience in a small club can be intimate and cosy; in a five-hundred-seater theatre where everyone is spread all over the room, it can seem the opposite. Nevertheless, Shapiro is a seasoned pro and he ain’t gonna let a little thing like that throw him.

Despite having spent half his life in The Netherlands and having a Dutch family, Shapiro is still unmistakably American. He is almost of the old school, almost a stereotypical American. With his smart suit, Brooks Brothers shirt, neat hair and smooth delivery, one could almost imagine him as a 1950s crooner in a previous incarnation. But despite that, there is a very sharp and dangerous edge to the man, an edge that cuts deep into Dutch and American politics and society, revealing the flaws and eccentricities as well as the myriad things that should be celebrated in both cultures. He has a unique viewpoint from where he can gaze on both sides, subjectively and objectively, all at the same time.

In *Leaving Trumpland*, Shapiro’s American family no longer asks, “When are you coming home?”, but “Can’t I come with you to the Netherlands?” Shapiro says he has never been so proud to be half-Dutch and that, looking at the current state of the USA, he finally understands the true meaning of gloating.

If you don’t know Greg Shapiro, I would highly recommend you buy yourself a ticket for this current tour and discover a comedian who is not only very funny but one who applies his unique situation to provide telling insights into life on both side of, as they say, the big pond. It is no longer a case of God Bless America but one of God Help America. And us all, come to that. **Michael Hasted 14th October 2020**

Greg Shapiro’s *Leaving Trumpland* is scheduled to continue until 18th December but due to new restrictions it would be wise to check the venues for any changes.

Listen to ArtsTalk Radio’s exclusive interview with Greg