

Getting laughs from life

Comedian Russell Peters is using personal material in his latest show

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Canadian comedian Russell Peters may have the bragging rights of being the first comedian to get a Netflix stand-up special with 2013's *No-torious*.

But while Netflix comedy specials are a dime a dozen these days, being the first global superstar of stand-up has its shortcomings.

"I have the distinction of being the first one, but then everybody else has the distinction of being paid more than I do," he tells *The Straits Times* in a telephone interview from his home in Los Angeles.

"I'd rather be the highest paid than the first because these days they pay them a lot of money – just not to me," he quips.

The 47-year-old, who is engaged and has a seven-year-old daughter from his first marriage, is returning to Singapore on Feb 24 for the *Deported World Tour* at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

The tour's name fits right in with the running theme of immigration that his previous shows and specials have had, including *The Green Card Tour* and *Russell Peters: Red,*

"I've been going to Singapore since the late 1990s, where I performed in the basement of the Marriott (Tang Plaza), at the bar where they used to do the comedy nights in the basement," he recalls.

"There are some people who remember me from back then and I still see them at shows. It's nice to go back and see the people who knew me when I had nothing."

His brand of observational comedy typically revolves around his Anglo-Indian upbringing and poking fun at racial and cultural stereotypes, all through storytelling and ribbing the audience, especially the ones sitting in the first few rows at his shows. Three decades of a comedy career later, he says that is still his "forte".

While he is a firm believer in the mantra of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it", he says his latest show, however, will feature new material and is "more personal and introspective".

"It's all about my real life, it's all true stories and it's been getting an amazing response in America, but I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing," he says.

He is also aware of his role in setting the precedent for other comedians of Indian descent to talk about their experiences as a minority and rise up the ranks quickly.

The likes of American comedian-actor Aziz Ansari and *The Daily Show* senior correspondent Hasan Minhaj have since gotten their own

