

THE COMEDY GAZELLE



ABOUT THE GAZELLE

When I first moved to Chicago, I was immediately struck by the level of talent in the scene. "Fuck, she's good," I thought as I watched Kristen Toomey annihilate a sold out Laugh Factory. *Why haven't I heard of her before?*

It's a question I come back to often, and a major problem here. The city's bursting with household-name-level talent, but unless you're in the midst of it, it can pass you by.

That's why I started The Comedy Gazelle — to bring outsiders into the heart of Chicago comedy, and to share knowledge that can hopefully make the scene that much stronger.

Thank you for your support!

— Jerry

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INTERVIEW: DAN SODER

One of the best comedians working today, I sat down with Dan Soder (@dansoder) to discuss adding voices to your act, knowing your genre of comedy, hitting his stride, polishing material, advice for underconfident comics, and more. You can watch his most recent special, *On the Road*, for free on YouTube.

I feel like a lot of comics can do voices, but I'm curious how you were able to actually incorporate them into your act?

Probably cause I grew up a big fan of guys like Dave Chappelle and Richard Pryor, Dana Carvey and Robin Williams – guys that would do voices, but weren't doing “Sylvester Stallone at the grocery store would look a little something like this!” The benefit of being the first generation of cable babies was I got to watch a lot of bad standup and I knew what I genuinely didn't like, and I didn't like the obvious lead-in to a voice. I liked guys that used voices to emphasize certain parts of bits or stories. There's a great one in *Live on the Sunset Strip*, where Richard Pryor does him trying to rob these mafia guys with a starter pistol, and he does all these mafia guy voices, and it's great. There's this bit that I love of Dana Carvey on *Critic's Choice*, where he talks about having a baby as like adopting a 100-year-old man, and then he just does the 100-year-old man. It's kind of like the premise and the setup are one in the same, and then he just gets to do a voice that pays off as an example and as a punchline. Chappelle I think is the king of it. There's moments where he cuts into stuff and it's brilliantly done, like when he does the Native American that he meets at Walmart in *For What It's Worth*. He does the drum thing, and then he just cuts it, and he goes, “The big ones are 50, the little ones are 25 and these are ten.” It's so funny, but he's not doing a voice just to do a voice. It serves a purpose. And I really, really always have loved that.

It's crazy you can just rattle off examples like that.

I was a huge comedy fan. Comedy was a thing that I took to that I just really fucking liked. Whenever I was home from school, I would just put on Comedy Central and be like, “Oh, this guy's really funny.” That's when I started recognizing guys that later would become like Gaffigan and Attell.



You have this bit in *On the Road*, where you talk about being a child of divorce and going between your parents like a shit-talking messenger. When you do that voice, was that something you structured the bit around, or did it just come out on stage?

I think it was just writing on stage. And I think that was something that I had talked about in therapy, so it was a much sadder subject. I think that's why therapy's so good for comics, because you can go look at stuff medicinally and get an adult perspective on it. But then, ultimately, you're like, “Oh, well, I gotta make fun of that.” But I was just writing on stage, and that voice is always a fun voice to do; I call it the young prince voice. It's very like, “I came from this!” I'm doing a joke right now – that probably won't make the special – about how funny I think it is that all the Rockefeller money is now comedians. So, they're going to have horrible grandkids. They're going to be walking around like, “My name is Delilah Rogan and my grandfather said that aliens were real! And he said DMT could let you meet God!” I just think it's funny that the legacy money now is all these fucking clowns. But that voice is a thing you can do at different times to make it silly.

Why are you thinking of dropping that? That's hilarious.

Sometimes you have funny ideas and they're just funny ideas. Sometimes there's stuff where you're like, "I can't really get that into a bit." For me, a good joke works every night and can get better every night. If you're just saying one thing, maybe what you do is take that one thing and put it into a bigger bit. Otherwise, it's like a magic trick where you're like, "MAH!" and they're like, "Okay." There's not a lot of volume to it. Sometimes lines or ideas like that are fun to do on stage and fuck around with, but you're like, "Well, it doesn't serve me a purpose, so I'm gonna take it out."

I'm curious how you're able to balance making a bit tight while also trying to grow it. A lot of times I'm like, "Oh, this idea is really hitting," and then I'll try to expand it, and it just dies.

Yeah, I know exactly what you're talking about. There's times where you can overdevelop a bit and the bit sucks. Sometimes the most simplistic form of the joke is the best because people can understand it easier. You're making something for them, but it has to be palpable. If you looked at it like you were a cook, you were putting too much of a seasoning in there, and they're like, "Ah, it's overwhelming," and you're like, "Yeah, sorry, I thought I could use some." But then you just gotta scale it back. What's great is that these things move, and you don't really know until you've locked it up. It's like, "Do I try to take it to another level? Or have I said everything that I need to say here? Or do I tie it to a bigger thing?" Some people are really good at tying it to big things. Kyle Kinane is amazing at that; he's amazing at taking a small thing and tying it to a very big thing in a very followable, entertaining way.

He's one of my favorites, and it's weird because there are so many well-respected comedians, like Kinane or Eddie Pepitone, but I feel like your average person — like my brother — has no idea who they are. Does that stuff ever bother you?

A helpful analogy for me not to feel crazy in this business is that I look at it less competitive and more like music. There's genres of comedy and people don't know they're in them. Your brother might love pop comedy, so he likes the stuff that's at the top that everyone's getting a little taste of and they go, "Oh, standup is this." But it's like finding a band and then that band leads you to other band, and then next thing you know, you're deep in the scene and you're like, "Yo, I fuck with Chicago because Kyle Kinane got me into it, and then I started listening to old Kumail Nanjiani,

then I started listening to Hannibal before he broke, and then I got into Geoff Asmus because he was a Chicago guy."

Damn, you know your Chicago. That's awesome.

I mean, that's how it was for me as a fan. I got into *Opie and Anthony*, which got me into Colin Quinn, into *Tough Crowd*, into Patrice [O'Neal], into Bill Burr, Bobby Kelly, Rich Vos and Jim Norton — all these guys that I became kind of obsessed with.

What genre do you think you're in?

I'd probably say my genre is "sensitive bro." I think the best analogy is that I'm like a guy you'd want to have a beer with at the airport. I'm just sitting there talking to you. We'll probably talk some bullshit, but I'm not going to get too serious. And if I tell you a story, it's going to be trying to be funny, you know? I'm never trying to bum you out; I'm not an Edinburgh guy. I'd probably classify myself as a New York guy, stylistically. I started in Tucson, but when I moved here two years into comedy, it was kind of like, "Oh, just reboot." The New York style is a lot of punchlines, conversational, and aggressive at times. But it's always been my dream to be a New York comic. You know, just a guy that you go see at the Cellar and go see on the road. Cause I idolized CK and Burr and Geraldo and Patrice and it was those guys that just really made me feel like, "Oh, this is the fucking funniest." It was just the best. And Chappelle was my guy; he's the reason I do standup. So it's fun to have that like you have your favorite bands.

How is it once you reach that point? Where you're like, "Oh I'm at the level of comic that got me into standup." Are you still like, "What's next?" or are you able to take a step back and enjoy it?

I'm at the stage right now where, comedically, I think I'm coming into my own. I think I'm finally starting to be more myself than I've ever been, I think

I'm enjoying standup more than I've ever been, and I think I'm focused on standup more than I've ever been. I had a lot of fun doing a lot of cool jobs, whether it be *The Bonfire*, which I left, or *Billions* which ended, but for me it was always standup. I didn't really care to go on acting. I liked doing it, but it wasn't something where I was like, "I'm gonna devote my time to this." *Bonfire* was the best. I got to do a show for eight years with who I think is the funniest human being on the planet, Jay Oakerson — and I had a fucking blast doing it — but I felt like I wasn't able to do standup the way I wanted to do it, which is sit down, actively write, and go and try these bits. I love standup; it's my favorite thing in the world and it's always been my favorite thing in the world. I think your powers really start gelling in your forties, especially for white dudes. I think for certain minorities, they've gone through some tough times and have more generational trauma to draw from, but I think with a white guy in his twenties, you're like, "I don't want to hear you tell me how it is." Then you hit your forties and you start getting a little humbled by age and you start being like, "I think it's like this." And this isn't just a racist theory; this is something that I've looked at in comedy. You see Louis hit his forties and he goes from doing these obscure, very funny, silly jokes to being like, "Fuck my kids. My kids are assholes." And you see Bill Burr go from being like, "Eh, fucking Crips is weird," to being like, "No, I'm serious, there's a problem with the population." You start to reach this thing, where it's like a maturity, and I think you stop caring about dumb, young shit, like pussy and money. If your purpose in this is to make money, God bless. It's going to be a fucking rough ending. I watched Colin Quinn and Dave Attell and all these guys around the Cellar that just get funnier and funnier with age, and they're just doing standup to do standup. Attell doesn't do standup cause he's trying to go host at the Video Music Awards.

Yeah, it's the love of the game.

He's just one of the greatest joke writers of all time. And Colin is developing these hours that are fucking unbelievable. Going back to the band analogy, it's like watching a band in their older age find new sounds and still contribute in a way that you're like, "This is fucking really good."

It's interesting you feel like you're hitting your stride, because I watched your most recent special with my sister, who knows nothing about comedy, and then I put on your old Comedy Central one and she goes, "That's the same guy?" She was like, "Oh wow. He's so much more comfortable."

Listen, man, what's crazy about this business is there are so called generational talents, and I think you can get lost in that. When I found out Mulaney was the same age as me, I was like, "No he's not. He's like 20 years older than me." He's so good at standup. And being close friends with Nate Bargatze and Shane Gillis, or someone like a Rory Scovel, where you see him and you're just like, "Oh my god, he's on a different level." I think you can get insecure and lost and be like, "Oh, fuck. I'll never." But the truth is, this is a thing you can improve on through concentration and execution. Like, you can get better. That's what I've realized in my late 30s and early 40s: I want to do it the best that I can do it. I'm not going to be able to do it the best that Chappelle did it, or Belzer did it, or Robin Williams, or Daniel Tosh or these unbelievable talents. You're like, "Well, I can only be the funniest that I can be. I can only be the most comfortable that I can be." So that's a fun thing to concentrate on because it's kind of like the pressure's off. The only pressure is if I'm having fun and if I'm evolving.



Yeah, it's like competing against yourself. It reminds me of bowling alone, honestly. You're just in your own lane, doing your thing.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's like, "How am I letting go of the ball? Am I whipping my leg around at the right time? Am I getting my wrist over to turn the ball? I know how to hit these pins; I've hit these pins before. Hit the pins again." It's very mental.

You mentioned you feel like you're getting better and better. Are you doing anything specific to improve?

I think the thing that's really helped me improve is enjoying it. Like, really enjoying it, where even if a joke doesn't land, it's not the end of the world. Even if a set doesn't go as good as I want, it's not the end of the world. The only important part was if I had fun. I remember there was a moment where I was on the road with Shane Gillis and he was featuring for me, it was like 2018, and I'd watch him and I'd be like, "This motherfucker's having so much fun. This guy's having a fucking blast, and I'm not." I'm up there like, "UGHHH!" And then it became a thing of like, man, I've had so many jobs that I've hated. I've had so many jobs where I've snuck into the corner of the warehouse or the restaurant where I was working just to be funny and hang out with people. And now I get to do that. So why the fuck am I not embracing that? And that kind of clicked for me, especially over the pandemic, where I had to stop touring as much. I got to sit with myself and really be like, "Oh yeah, I want to have fun doing this." Who gives a shit about clicks and ticket sales and all this stuff if you hate doing it? Then it's a nightmare. Then it's a fucking nightmare, traveling and worrying about people not having fun. Man, fuck that shit.

I feel like it's especially hard when you're coming up, where you're trying to have fun, but you're worried about doing well so you get that next booking.

I mean, listen, man. I'm talking from a place of privilege. I'm talking from a place where I'm headlining my shows and finally starting to sell tickets for real. I'm very lucky, but I do remember coming up and being laser focused. And sometimes I think that might have hurt me. I think if I would have had fun, I would have done better.

Looking back on when you were coming up, what are some things that you wish you knew or had done differently?

I wish I would have been more aware that putting your stuff online does more for fans than getting it behind a paywall. And I regret doing my Comedy Central hour; I think I should have held that hour. I would have had a

very, very good first hour for, like, Netflix the next year. I think I was trying to appease too many people and not myself.

When you recorded it, did you feel like you could still be working on it?

Oh my god, I needed another year with it at least. Then I turned around and I did The Standups on Netflix because I was kind of reeling. I was like, "I put out the Comedy Central hour and no one watched it." Netflix came up to me and they were like, "Hey, do you want to do a half hour?" I barely had 28 new minutes that I liked; I barely had a new headlining set. It was just an opportunity to film with Nate [Bargatze]. When we were coming up, he always did things like two years before I did, so it was kind of nice to be like, "Fuck yeah, I would love to tape a special with Nate." But I don't think it was my best and that half hour probably should have been in the hour that was recorded before. And half that shit should have been rearranged and knocked down. There were some good bits between the two, but as overall products, I did not like my Comedy Central hour or my Netflix half hour.

I'm guessing you feel good about this YouTube special you just put out.

I felt like it showed. I was very, very happy with the HBO hour, and I think that was the start of where I was going. I think the YouTube thing was just a check in; it was more of a mixtape. I was kind of going like, "Hey, I'm working on it." I think the next hour, I don't know when it's going to be — probably not for a couple more years — but I'm having a fucking blast right now. Just touring and working on it and tinkering with it and throwing in new stuff and taking out stuff and just really fucking around. I would say my next hour is the one that I'm the most excited for.

"I DO REMEMBER COMING UP AND BEING LASER FOCUSED. AND SOMETIMES I THINK THAT MIGHT HAVE HURT ME. I THINK IF I WOULD HAVE HAD FUN, I WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER."

When you're polishing your hour, when do you know if a joke is ready?

You know this as a comic, but there are moments where you're in a joke and you can feel when it feels right. You're like, "That is the best word and the best sentence in the best place that I can get it for this joke." And you go, "That's finished." You just know it. You do it every night, so you try it a thousand different ways. And then when it sticks, you go, "Now I'm gonna do it." And then you run it, but you kind of let off the gas. You kind of let it just drive itself — you ghost ride the whip. And when you ghost ride, you're like, "Oh, that's moving." Then you run everything to that level, where you go, "This is the best it's gonna do."

And when you're polishing bits, what are you focusing on specifically? I feel like I tend to focus on the words, but I don't really think about stuff like inflections or movement.

Oh man, that changes everything. Inflections, pacing, timing. The thing I'm learning as I get older is movement. Now that I'm starting to do theaters, I'm starting to realize that you got to move around. They're watching you. They're not just listening to you; they're watching you. [Mark] Normand and I did a couple of shows with Jim Jefferies, and I was fascinated watching him and his fluid movement while he does these great jokes. I was like, "Oh, this is awesome." And I love that. I love watching people and being jealous of shit of theirs, like, "Oh, I like that."

Do you have any advice for breaking into movement?

I'm just starting to do it. New York has always had a thing with LA where they would talk shit about it stylistically, but the people that come up primarily in LA are fucking fantastic at performing: Fahim Anwar, Andrew Santino — another Chicago guy. Whereas us, we have small stages, so we just stand there and do punchlines. I would say that when you have a big stage, use it. You got all this space. You don't have to do a somersault, but go walk to one side and do two jokes. Walk over to the other side, do two jokes. Walk back to the stool, do a joke. You know, change it up.

And is there any advice you've gotten that still sticks with you today?

I don't know if I can attribute it to anybody, but when I was coming up, the best advice I got was: "Try to do your best and don't be a dickhead." It's really simple, but very hard to execute. But if you can do it, you'll be easy to work with and you'll get the job done every time. And that's all that anyone can ask for. Oh, and if you're a dickhead, apologize.

I feel like a lot of young comics need encouragement to keep going. Do you have any advice for people that are frustrated or maybe down on themselves?

Yeah, don't read the internet. And listen to people that you respect. Don't listen to criticisms of people you wouldn't take advice from. I had a lot of shitty open micers tell me I sucked when I was young and it fucked with me. Then I listened to the people that I loved and respected, like Nate [Bargatze], Joe List, and Big Jay, just being like, "No, you're funny." I remember like 12 years ago, I just gotten into the Cellar, and Keith Robinson and I were hanging out there during the day, and I said something about another comic. I was like, "Well, I'll never be as funny as him." And Keith was like, "Don't ever say that. You're already funnier than him, but you don't even know that. But don't say that you're not as funny." Just that belief of like, not even wincing. Just being like, "No, you're as good." That makes you go, "Oh, fuck." You know, there's people that are overconfident in this game and there's people that are underconfident in this game, and the only people that people talk about are the ones that are cocky and overconfident. But I think the bigger problem is the people that are underconfident, the people that lack confidence, that are insecure, that are fucking scared to be themselves. It's like one of those famous scenes in a movie where a little girl doesn't want to sing and then her auntie's like, "Come on, baby!" And then she's like, [singing] "Ahh-ahh-ahh!" You know, has the voice of an angel. But if you listen to the people you love and respect, you'll find yourself there. If you're listening to people that are online or clout chasing or bullshitting you, you're gonna be fucked. But if you listen to people that you have long relationships with that you trust and respect, you'll be alright.

I love that.

There's also gonna be people that you respect that don't like your comedy, and that's fucking fine. I went through a whole thing where all my favorite legends loved all my friends except me. I would see Bill Burr and he'd be like, "Are you still doing standup?" And you're like, "Yeah. You're my fucking hero, but yeah, I'm doing it." But then you're like, "Well, I'm not doing this for him," and you let go. You're like, "I'm doing this for me. I'm doing this because I enjoy it." But have people that you love and respect. And listen to them. Because they're the ones that love and respect you, and they see you for who you are.

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SHOW SPOTLIGHT: 2025 ROAST BATTLE TOURNAMENT

Winner of the 2024 Gazellie for Best Independent Show, Roast Battle Chicago kicks off its annual tournament on February 20. I sat down with producer Chris Grieco (@chrisgrieco.jpg) to discuss the tourney, livestreaming the green room, his advice and pitch to new roasters, and more. Submissions for the tournament close this FRIDAY, January 24!

I know generally a few things change every year with the tournament. What do you have this year that's new and exciting?

We're doubling and having 64 people this year. The first year we had 64 and then we went down to 32 for the next two. This is the fourth tournament that we're doing, and we're going back to 64 because we had to cut a lot of people that signed up last year. People want to be a part of it, so we figured we'd open it up. We're also going to be doing a double show at Zanies, which is a first for us. The third round of the tournament, we're doing two shows on one night at Zanies, which I'm very, very excited for. And the potential special guests on panel this year is crazy, dude. What we have lined up, I'm really excited for. I can't say who it is, but it's gonna be very cool. Then we have other ways that we're going to be elevating the tournament this year too.

Like what?

So, there are two main things that are changing for Roast Battle Chicago. One is that we are going to be going weekly in 2025, in terms of putting out full shows. We're putting up pretty much every show we do, and we're going to be putting them on YouTube in full. But we're also going to be doing a green room hang that's a live stream of the green room. So, during the tournament people will be able to see the battles as well as the comics' reactions to the battles in the green room. People will be able to see what it's like: comics scribbling in their notes, figuring out what they're gonna do, all that stuff. I was watching a live stream this year that I got really into, and I was tuning in week after week to see how it was going. I was like, "If this is working for me, this might work for some of our fans," and I think that they'll really like it.



Very cool. I know for some comics, the hesitation with Roast Battle is not wanting to be filmed. What would you say to comics who are hesitant to do the show because of it being put out on the internet?

Well, I think that's part of the appeal of the show for a lot of comics. For every comic that doesn't want their stuff out there, there are five more comics that are like, "Yeah, I'm trying to build my social media following and I want people to watch my shit." And so that's the mindset that we produce the show in, and that's the direction the show has been moving in. It's a show that is put out there for people to see, warts and all. I totally understand if somebody doesn't want to be a part of it. If you want performances that stay in the room, I think that's pretty much every other show. And I think that's great, we're just providing an option that has a little more of a spotlight. If you're nervous about it, I would say to just overprepare and overcommunicate with your partner. Just be excited to be there. It doesn't always go well, and that's okay. I think we've all had performances up there where we're like, "Fuck man, I wish it went different."

Can you talk about preparing with your partner a little bit? I know generally you want to work with them to put on a good performance, but is it different with this being a tournament?

That's a great question. I don't think it changes just because it's a tournament; I think all the fundamentals stay the same. Yeah, it's a competition now and winning matters, but you're still going to have a bad performance if you don't communicate. If you don't talk to them and you don't get any info about their life or interests, you're forced to kind of do hackier jokes. If you don't communicate, you're forced to be shitty. So, I still think it remains the same: set boundaries with your partner, have a great performance, and just try outwrite them.

What would be your pitch to somebody that's never done Roast Battle, but is considering signing up for the tournament?

We want everybody. We want as many people as possible to make it a diverse bracket for the audience. If we have too many people that are just one note, it's not gonna be a very engaging show. If you're new and you are like, "Hey, I wanna try something different in comedy," sign up. If you're feeling burned out on standup, if you're feeling like you're not going anywhere, if you're spinning your wheels at mics, or maybe you have writer's block, sign up. There are stakes, but it's not crazy stakes. Sometimes you get knocked out in the first round, but it's all good cause you came and had a good night. But sometimes it turns into a second round and a third round, and the next thing you know, you're in the finals. It's a great writing exercise and it's a great way to connect with other comics. Plus, you get to be in a really, really cool comedy scenario that only happens once a year. If there was any year to sign up, it's this one. It's the biggest pool that we've done in years, and it's the biggest audience we've ever had online. If I was a comic in the scene that wasn't super involved and was looking to shake things up, I'd be really excited to sign up.

Who won it last year and what did they get out of it?

Last year, Max Sorich won. He had done a few battles before this, so I knew he was a strong contender, but he really took it seriously and he just beat everybody. I had picked [Eric] Emerson or Matthew Mitchell to be the winners. Then when Max Sorich beat Emerson, I was like, "Oh shit." He just had really great writing. Then when he won, he got the cash prize,

the belt, and he was considered the champion and got to defend the belt. But he also got a residency on panel. Anytime somebody wins the championship, they're basically a default panel member and become part of the show. Those are all paid spots, and being on panel is the most fun position. Then in Max's case, which is a unique one, he also came on to be a producer of the show.

Didn't he get sent out to battle at the Mothership as well?

Yeah, so there are Roast Battle League events that happen monthly, and they're always asking us who our top battlers are. They're like, "Who do you recommend?" So, Max went out to the Mothership, he battled, and he won, and he was also one of the MVPs of the league.

Do you have any roast advice for a first-time roaster who's looking to do the tournament?

Get to know your opponent. Whether you're in a tournament or not, that's the foundation of a roast battle: communication with your partner. You notice how bad a roast battle can be when people are not talking to each other and are forced to do really hacky setups. The second that you open communication with the person that you're about to do a performance with, it elevates you both in a way that cannot be overstated. So that's number one: communication. Number two is a sub-genre of that, which is talk about boundaries. We see that happen occasionally, where someone will say something, and they'll get mad and clipped. But that can be prevented if you take the time to be like, "Hey, listen, don't bring this up, don't bring that up." So, discuss boundaries and then honor them. You guys are doing a performance together, so it would be cool to not be a dick, you know? I would also say prepare comebacks. Don't just write the jokes. You gotta prepare for what people are gonna say about you too. If I went into every roast battle and I didn't have a comeback for them calling me a Hot Topic manager,

then I would be in bad shape. Then the other two things are: don't be a sore loser -- that's really annoying and lame -- and you get out of it what you put into it. If you don't really write for it and you shrug it off, the audience can tell and they're gonna be pretty bored with you. But if you really put your nose to the grindstone and try to write some really clever jokes, the audience will love it. So, those are the basics, and I think if you do that, you're gonna get way further in the tournament than you would have otherwise.

Why should audience members come out and see this versus your standard Roast Battle show?

This is the best version of Roast Battle, in my opinion. There is no stand up; it's just six shows of rapid-fire battles with the best panel that we can book in this scene. The energy every year is really crazy, especially for the early shows. And then the later shows, it turns into more of a traditional style, but at that point, you're seeing battlers that have honed their shit week after week. But it is the best version of seeing Roast Battle Chicago by far. You get more battles than you ever would, you get newer, fresher faces, and you get the people that are the best in Chicago as a part of the show as well. We start our first four shows at Lincoln Lodge on February 20 and February 27, and then every other show is weekly on Thursdays at Zanies Chicago.

What excites you the most about the year ahead?

What I love about the tournament is that it sets the tone for the year and highlights a bunch of comics we would have otherwise not seen. People don't message us a lot of times, and then the tournament comes up and they sign up. So, it's a great way to start off the year and see a bunch of new talent and get a brand-new roster of comics. And for the rest of the year, I'm really excited about bringing on Joke Swap, which is my other favorite show in the city, honestly. We're going to be working on shows together and highlighting some of them on our YouTube channel. I'm really excited to introduce our audience to what Lucy Ferrante has been doing with Joke Swap, because she's been doing a great job, and I think that that show is almost a sister show to ours in a lot of ways. So, those are the most exciting things: going weekly, introducing all the new talent, and doing Joke Swap.

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RYDER OLLE, MINA BOND, CODY HECK
JAMES FISHER JR., TIM BRENNAN, HANNAH BECK

Laugh Factory | 8:00pm | 1/29/25

Comedians Recognizing Comedians

CLAIRE PARLETTE

In a scene where we NEED more high quality indie shows, Claire has taken the lead on producing some of my favorites recently (WIGS and Comedy&Caviar). She's not only hilarious with great act outs, but is also creating valuable stage time for herself and other comics.

KRISTI DURKIN

Kristi Durkin is FEARLESS onstage. She's a force to be reckoned with. Watching her onstage makes me feel inspired to take more risks. She is one of the funniest and most authentic comedians in Chicago

JAMES FISHER JR.

James is legit one of the funniest guys to see riff with a crowd. He never waivers to far from his act as he always steers it back, but he is able to just be joyful in a jumpy situation. He projects enthusiasm for his comedy.

JULIA RETTIG

People should know about Julia - she's new to Chicago but has been killing it all over town. I have yet to see a set from her that didn't impress me. Book her on your shows

FEMMI

An amazing and hilarious host for his show. His chants go crazy!

DELILAH ORIZABA

Delilah's comedy is not a schtick. It's genuine humor that she pulls from life experience. She also has the best laugh, which makes you feel like you're doing something right.

MO BURNS

Mo is a joy on stage and off. Meet him once and you want to book him on all your shows and be his best buddy. The scene is lucky to have him.

THE HERALD GUYS

They tell it how it is.

**HAVE SUGGESTIONS?
WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?**

DM US @COMEDYGAZELLE

