

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. It was also the pandemic and I had shit else to do.

Thanks for your support!

— Jerry

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INTERVIEW: GEOFF ASMUS

Now a nationally touring headliner and regular at the Comedy Cellar, a lot has changed for Geoff Asmus (@geoffreyatm) since our last interview. We talk breaking through on social media, work-life balance, a day in the life of a mid-tier comedian, winning in the long-term, auditioning at the Cellar, and more.

I was going through our last interview from 2021, and you said your dream scenario was to get 40-50,000 followers so you could tour 20 weeks a year.

Wow. Damn, am I living my dream? I guess I am. I actually like hearing that; it puts things in perspective.

You said it wasn't realistic because you “know how the world works” and now you're at 180,000 and touring all over.

That was in 2021 when comedy was just coming back. I was very cynical then. I'm cynical in a different way now, but that was when I thought comedy might not fully come back. But that's crazy. I'm doing it, I guess.

How has your cynicism changed?

I'm cynical in that I think social media rewards mediocrity, unfortunately. I think I learned how to use social media for my own benefits, but I think the algorithm does reward quantity over quality.

What else changed for you that allowed you to get where you are now?

I honestly stopped caring. I just don't care. I only care if I think something's funny. I just do things for me, and I think that actually makes my comedy funnier because it's more honest. I think before, there was maybe a third of my act that was stuff I didn't fully believe in. I was just trying to do the jokes I thought people would like. And I still do a few of those, but mostly if I don't think it's funny I don't do it. And if I don't want to promote on a Wednesday, I don't share a promo post on a Wednesday. Once it starts feeling like a job that you are forced to do, I kind of check out. I take it seriously, but if you're not having fun, what's the point?

How much of what you're doing now is just building an audience versus actually doing standup?

Oh yeah, that's what I do online. I post a lot of shit that pisses people off, which is good for engagement. Let's just say, hypothetically, I get 5,000 followers a month. I also lose 2,000. I get a lot of people unfollowing me, but



How is it actually performing for your own audience?

It is amazing. It's easier. I can kind of do things that I wouldn't do at the Comedy Cellar in New York for tourists or whatever. Cause once they know you, most of the crowd has bought into the idea that I'm this insufferable loud virgin who talks about cum and Chomsky or whatever. They've bought into the idea, so you can kind of go a little further. But you don't want to get too comfortable; you still want to be able to do a crowd that's not there for you too. You can get stuck just playing to your bubble.

How much of your time would you say you spend working on social media stuff versus actually writing and performing?

I'm lucky. In the last year I've been able to farm out and pay people to do like two thirds of the social media stuff. I still do some of it. I post it, I edit some of it, but I'm thankfully able to pay some people to do it. But it's still a very hands-on thing. I still have to interact with them all the time. I probably work on social media 30 hours a week still, in terms of editing and posting on five different platforms. It costs a lot of money too. The people who do it are good, but I still pay like 10% of my income to them. And if I wanted to really do it, it would cost like three or four times as much. Every comedian has a stable of people helping them put out content now. I only have three people,

but I know comics who have like 12 employees putting out content. Someone like Gianmarco, he's cranking out content and has employees working for him. That's what you have to do now. You can't do it on your own; it's impossible.

Are you able to make a living just on comedy now?

I am, yeah. I have been probably since the interview three years ago. I feel like that was the beginning of it. I mean, I probably work 60 hours a week, but I am making a good living. It's not as much as you think it would be; you gotta pay 10% to the manager, 10% to the agent, 10% to the social media people, you gotta pay taxes. Everyone wants a fucking piece of the king. The finances of comedy don't make much sense, but it's working out better recently.

As far as posting, you're doing YouTube, Instagram, TikTok?

Yeah, TikTok I kind of gave up on because the algorithm seems to just censor anything that's remotely edgy. I still post, but I don't expect much from it. It's mostly Instagram, YouTube and Reddit. I use Reddit a lot. Reddit's awesome because it's like a democratic algorithm. It's just whoever gets the most upvotes; there's no sinister numbers behind picking what gets shown. I've also been a Redditor for years, so it's just fun to post on there anyways.

I was going to say, a lot of your audience is probably right there.

Yeah, it's very much my crowd. And it's people who like standup; there's a standup comedy subreddit. So if people like you there, they're standup fans, so they'll actually buy tickets. I sell a lot of tickets from Reddit.

Alright, let's move off social media. I just know everyone's curious about you blowing up.

Everyone thinks there's a secret, like, "Oh, you gotta post on Wednesdays at 8pm!" You just gotta keep posting until something goes viral randomly. I posted for years and then just randomly a joke about a prayer I did in Catholic school went viral. It's never the one you think, because it's not about the funniest joke, it's about jokes that get engagement. It's about things that people comment on or get mad about. I've posted jokes that do great on stage, and they get 14 likes. Then I post a riff about Marvel and it's got a thousand nerds in the comments arguing. But that's what the algorithm wants: engagement. The quality isn't all that important. You can post a well-crafted joke, but if it doesn't resonate it's not going to go anywhere.

Back when we did our first interview, you were talking about trying to work smarter instead of harder. What are a few recent examples of you doing that?

Well, I'm not out grinding every night. People are like, "You gotta perform every night!" But you can get just as much out of staying in and writing or just enjoying life. Your comedy will be better if you hang out with friends every once in a while. I think I used to get way too into this "you got to work every fucking second of your life" mentality and I think it hurts your comedy in the end, honestly. Is going out and doing two open mics that will take my entire life really worth more than sitting down and writing for 90 minutes at home? Probably not. It's probably a better use of your time to write and then go watch a show or read a book. I think reading is a very important thing to being good at writing. Reading a book could be just as useful as going to an open mic, in my opinion. You can tell a lot of people don't read by how bad their joke writing is because their word choices are terrible and they're not good at constructing sentences. I think reading has helped me a lot with comedy, honestly. I also try not to book too many shows; you're just spread too thin. I don't need to do a one nighter in Omaha. I don't need to waste my time doing things where I'm just going to be tired and sad. It's just gonna make me hate comedy.

It sounds like you have a little bit more balance now.

Yeah, the work-life balance; that's what I'm getting at. You want to work hard, you want to perform a lot, but there's a point where it makes you resent standup as well. I had that earlier this spring. I was touring too much and I just fucking hated standup for two months because I was on the road way too much. Now I've pulled it back and I don't do shows on Monday or Tuesday anymore and it's great. I just have those days to myself

now. My weekend is Monday and Tuesday. I get pumped for a Tuesday.

That's so funny because I'm about to throw this quote back at you.

Oh, what did I say? I think I was more in grind mode back then.

"There's an idea that you gotta have a good balance between work and life. Maybe that's true if you're an accountant, but that's not how comedy works. It is your life... There's no comedian ever who's made it who's like, 'Well, every Tuesday, I don't think about comedy.' They've never made it."

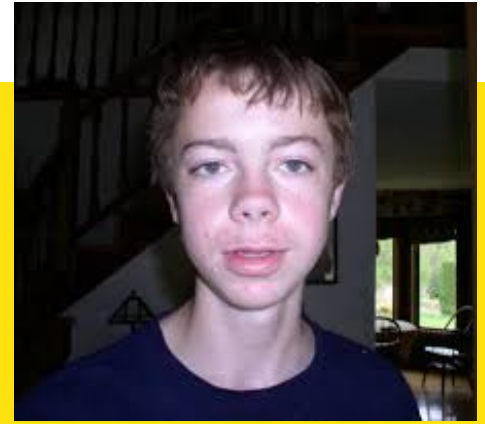
Well, okay. I think I still have a valid point; I still think about comedy. I'm still always writing jokes, but the idea that you have to be out doing sets all the time? Also, I think there's a point where you work really hard and you do reach a new level where you don't have to work that hard. The hardest part of comedy is getting your foot in the door and getting fans and getting the algorithm to pay attention to you. Once you get that, you don't have to work as hard. I hadn't achieved that three years ago. Now that I've gotten there, I've kind of gotten over the first peak of the mountain and I can see that, "Oh, I don't have to hike that hard anymore." I grinded pretty hard for like nine or 10 years, and now I can backpedal a little bit now that I've got the career part at least.

That's a fair point. Once you're actually making a living at it and it is your job, then work-life balance kind of makes sense.

Yeah, until you get to that point I do think it should be a mostly all-consuming thing. I didn't go to concerts or sports games or really hang out with many friends that weren't comedians for like eight or nine years. And now I feel like I've earned the relaxation a little bit and I think it helps my comedy. But back then I did have to work hard. You do have to make sacrifices. I didn't go to a couple of college friends' weddings cause I was booked. I do deeply regret that now, but at the time I had to do it for my career and literally to live. I had to pay rent somehow.

"Sorry, dude. I'm in North Dakota."

Yeah, "I gotta do Bismarck, man. The VFW is calling!" You have to make those sacrifices on the climb, but then you do reach a plateau at some point.



Has anything changed for you process wise? Are you still sitting down with the timer?

I don't do it as strictly anymore. I do still put the phone away, but I've gotten away from writing physically. I probably should get back to that, but now that I get to headline a lot and do long sets, I write on stage more. I think of the skeleton of an idea and then I can try it on stage now that I know that the audience likes me. They're forgiving and they like when you do new stuff, so I'm able to fuck around a little bit more. I probably write less than I used to, but I also make more material because I get to do so much stage time. If I do a weekend, that's five shows and I probably do a 70 minute set each show. That's a ton of stage time. So you don't have to sit around and write as much; I'll just find out on stage if it's funny or not. But that's another thing; I worked hard and I was able to achieve that. I couldn't do that for years.

I'm wondering if you have any advice for Chicago comics. Say you're doing a spot at Laugh Factory and you want to do newer material, but also you need to crush this spot so you're invited back. How do you balance working in new material to grow your act while still making sure you do well?

Yeah, that is a tough one. I think when you start out at a club, you gotta kill the first maybe four or five times to show them you belong. But don't just go up there rigid. If someone does something before your set that you think of a riff for, do the riff when

you open. Don't just go up and act like nothing happened. I think a lot of people get nervous and they're like, "I gotta do my set!" but you should be a normal person too. React and change to the situation; I think that'll make your set better. But eventually, if you have a good 10 or 15 minute set, you can just sandwich the new jokes in the middle. And if they bomb, you should be a good enough comic to recover from it, I think.

I always appreciated you bringing up the notebook and trying new things.

I always bring my notebook on stage. A lot of people make fun of it, but I don't really see what the big deal is. It's like, "Oh cool, you could memorize your bad jokes?" I'll probably tape my special with a notebook on stage. I don't see what the big deal is as long as you're funny. I think if you write 15 minutes that kills and you do it every week; that's a short-term win. But the long-term win is like, oh, maybe you only have a B+ set every time, but you get a new minute of material each set. In the long run, you're going to win by being a better comic. The goal isn't to do a 15 minute spot at a club; the goal is to do an hour as a headliner. A lot of these people, they can do a 15 minute spot and kill, but you give them a headlining spot and they never bothered to write new material. So I think that's a very short-term, short-sighted thing to do.

Yeah, I could always tell you were building stuff and never worried about one specific show.

We don't live in like the 70s anymore where it's like, "Fucking Eddie Brill saw me in the back and took me on Letterman!" No one show is going to change your life anymore; it hasn't been that way for like 30 years. I think you just want to get a little better. You should do something new every single show, even if it's just one line or "I'll put my hands like this during that joke." It'll make you more excited too and you'll do better. If you're just doing the same thing, the audience can tell. They're stupid, but they're not that stupid.

When you were in Chicago, I saw you booking your own shows at all these random breweries throughout the Midwest. Can you talk about creating your own opportunities on the road?

That was a really fun decision I made. Basically what I did is I searched for towns in the Midwest with more than 20,000 people, I looked up what breweries were there, I got the email, and I sent a cold email to probably 150 breweries, like, "Oh, I've done these things. I have a few followers. I've set up shows. Would you let us set up a show at your venue?" I'd say 10 percent of them got back

to me. And it was in small towns, so they're desperate for entertainment. It'd be like Sheboygan; there's 40,000 people there, but there's not a comedy club. There's a market for comedy everywhere. People want to be entertained in Rockford too; their lives are sad and pathetic. They need comedy. People go to Milwaukee and Chicago, but there's so much of America that's untapped for comedy if you're willing to travel and go out there. They're not all dumb, racist hicks. We did a show in Manitowoc, where Making a Murderer happened, and it was amazing. Reach out to these places. Obviously, you gotta knock it out of the park when you do it, but a lot of people are willing to at least give you a shot. If you want to go to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, you can do a show there. Go to La Crosse. It's not as hard as you think to get people to come cause they've never been to a comedy show. Or they've been to one; they saw Jerry Seinfeld in 1993. But they are willing to give you a shot.

So you're doing a spot tonight in New York. As an example, can you walk me through what you've done today to prep for that?

Okay, I'll just go through my day for what I did for comedy. Let's say I headline and do four shows in Seattle — I record all of them and send the files to Lucy Ferrante who combs through each set and finds the funny crowd work moments or maybe local references, and then she sends them to me and I look through those and decide which ones I want to caption. That probably took two or three hours because it was four shows worth. Then I did promo for an hour; I sent out emails for each of my upcoming shows over the next month and a half. And then before this interview, I wrote for like half an hour. I was just writing down which jokes I think are gonna make the special, which ones need some work,

and which ones maybe aren't quite ready. Then after this interview, I'll probably have 30 or 40 minutes to go through the headliner set I did last night and see which new jokes worked and figure it out for this spot tonight. I wasn't working the whole day, but that's about five hours of work today, I would say. Plus the show and the rest. So it'll be about six or seven hours of work, and that was probably a lighter day. So that's the day in the life of a mid-tier comedian, folks!

I think it's so crazy how much extra stuff you gotta do now.

Yeah, it's not just being a comedian anymore. You're like a full social media guru, writer, editor. I never thought I'd have to become an expert at Adobe Premiere, but I know more about Adobe Premiere than some filmmakers now just from fucking making clips. Every comedian with fans is looking for someone to do that for them. I'm so glad that people reached out and they do it for me now; I was about to have a nervous breakdown like eight or ten months ago from doing it all.

I feel like the smarter career path is to get in on production, like James Webb.

Yeah, producing specials or being the guy who goes on the road with a comic. Gianmarco Soresi has someone who comes along with him and films it and chops it up. I haven't reached that level yet, but maybe soon. I still have to set up the fucking camera and film myself half the time. I'm clicking start and then running on stage when they say my name.

We'll have to do another interview in three years.

Yeah, exactly. I'll be like, "I can't believe I had to record myself!" I can't believe you said my goal was 40 to 50,000 followers. Now, I'm like, "If you don't have 75k, put a gun in your mouth!" But also, in the last three years, followers mean less than they used to. Your followers don't even see the things you post anymore. Every time I go to a city – let's say I go to Kansas City – the second I leave I get 50 messages: "When are you coming to Kansas City, man?" It's like, "I've been posting every day for three months that I'm coming to Kansas City." They just don't see it. It's not their fault; the algorithm's just not what it was three years ago.

You touched on it earlier, but how do you avoid burnout? I feel like there's so much on your plate constantly.

I think having a hobby is incredibly important. I play guitar or I read books. You gotta have something else that you care about. I would say I care more about playing guitar than I do about comedy sometimes. It makes my

comedy better, honestly, to have these other outlets. You can't just put all your creative energy in comedy because it's not always going to give you back what you want and you'll resent it if you only myopically focus on standup. And you just have to have fun. You do have to realize that you can't take it 100% seriously. If you do comedy and you're miserable, you don't have to do comedy. No one's forcing you to tell jokes if you don't find it fun. I'm having a blast on stage; I love performing. I think you have to realize that in the end, we're just talking about cum. And if you can't have fun doing that, you're probably just a miserable person.

What aspect of being on stage is fun for you? Like for me, I love getting away with something that I shouldn't be able to.

I do like making people squirm a little bit, like saying something that no human should ever say. That is fun. I like seeing 80% of the crowd laugh, but 20% of the people go, "What the fuck is he doing?" That gives me great joy. There's some famous comic who was like, "You don't want everyone to laugh. You want like 80% of the people to laugh."

Yeah, I think it was Patrice.

I think that's some of the best advice I ever heard. Cause when you make everyone laugh, you're probably a hack. It's probably boring, Russell Peters comedy – no shade to the great Indian comic, Russell Peters. But I like the travel aspect of comedy. I'm really obsessed with incorporating local things into my sets. When I go to cities, I'll talk about the neighboring small town they hate. I try to write two or three minutes about the city or maybe the history or famous people from there. Doesn't always go well, but even if it doesn't, they appreciate that I even tried and it's just a fun way to make it not all monotonous. I really enjoy doing that.

I saw your Germany stuff on Youtube. That was great.

That was really fun. I got to Berlin early and I just wrote Hitler jokes for three days. I only had one show to do them, and it turned out that the Germans are actually really cool. I really like writing local jokes, but you want to put your own spin on it. Everyone makes a joke about homeless people in Portland, but can I find a unique spin on it? That's kind of a fun challenge.

And how was your whole Europe trip?

Europe was amazing. Unfortunately, they are smarter than Americans in pretty much every aspect. They are just smarter and more cultured. I feel like with American comedy, people are there to party. We have two drink minimums and people are rowdy. That's not really the case in Europe. Some venues didn't even serve alcohol. No one heckled – until Ireland, of course; some drunk lady in Ireland heckled. But they're really respectful and they respect comedy as an art form in a way that Americans don't. I feel like Americans feel like they're part of the show or they're just there to have a good time, but Europeans are like, "Hmm interesting." They clap a lot. They love to clap instead of laugh, which is kind of frustrating. At first I thought I was bombing, but then they were like, "No, we just give polite golf claps."

I wanted to ask you about New York and the Cellar. What is it like working alongside some of the best to do it? Is it motivating? Scary? What's your experience been?

It's motivating and it puts everything in context. You get to see amazing comics bomb, and I think that's a good thing. I'm not gonna say any name, but like everyone bombs. I think that's a very important thing that a lot of people don't know: you'll see celebrities drop in at the Cellar and they'll just eat their fucking ass. Everyone bombs; you can't feel bad about bombing. And you see someone who fucking kills at the Cellar, like Yamaneika Saunders, who just fucking murders every night, and you're like, "Okay I gotta get on that level." Or someone like Nathan Macintosh. I actually am more interested in the non-famous comics who kill; there's all these people that not everyone knows about that are just amazing comedians. Nathan Macintosh is like the funniest person to ever live, and he has a career, but he should be so famous. Same with Daniel Simonsen. That's the thing I've learned in New York: you just have to be funny and hope it happens. The goal is to be funny. People in New York, they just want to be good at stand up, and I do like being around people like that.

How would you compare it to Chicago?

Chicago is a great scene. I don't want to knock Chicago, but people in New York do take it a little more seriously. They're not going to Galway Bay and getting lit up every night until 4:00am. Which is fun, I've got nothing against drinking all night, but there is a sense that if you move to New York, it is your job. I've noticed people don't drink nearly as much here, especially at the Cellar. If I get a beer, people are like, "Really? Getting a beer?" I would say so many comics are sober here, and they just take it a little more seriously. Not that you can't be a drunk and make it, but it's just harder.



You mentioned seeing famous comics bomb. How does a celebrity comedian handle a bomb? Is it uncomfortable to watch?

They don't give a fucking shit. They've reached a point of zen so far beyond where we are that it doesn't matter. They don't care if they kill or bomb; they're just happy to be on the stage and performing their thoughts, I think. They're just having a good time. A lot of people are like, "Is it hard to follow Chris Rock or Louis or whatever?" It's actually not that hard because they're usually doing very new material and they rarely kill. They'll do well, but if you go up there afterwards with a polished set, it's not gonna be that difficult to follow them. They're like saying their thoughts for the day. There'll be some great jokes, but a lot of it is their first time saying the entire set, probably.

When you auditioned there did you go up with your notebook?

I did not. They don't like that; they're kind of a comedy purists, which I get. But the audition was only five minutes, so I didn't need it. I think I followed Jim Norton on a Friday night and [the booker] just sits in the back, but the back is like twelve feet away. I wouldn't say I killed, but I did pretty well. After three minutes she walked out, and I thought that meant that she hated it and I wasn't gonna get passed, so the last two minutes I was fucking sweating. But that actually meant she'd seen enough, and afterwards she was like, "You are passed." But for two minutes I thought my life was over.

It's just a five minute audition?

Yeah, so you need two people who are passed to vouch for you. I had Normand, Sam Morril and Raanan Hersherberg, and then it's a five minute audition. Like 80% of people pass the audition. When you get passed, she'll book you a lot; you'll get like 10 or 12 spots a week for a month. And basically the real audition is doing well at those spots. The other staff and the managers, they're all whispering to each other about who's good, who's bad. So that's really the audition, in my opinion.

Before we go, what kind of advice would you give to somebody in Chicago that was in your position a few years ago – in at the clubs, getting on the road – how do you take that next step and actually start making a living at it?

I think everyone kind of needs to have a podcast these days. That's how you retain fans, basically. Like, "Oh, you like me? Listen to my podcast." If someone listens to your podcast, they're going to be a fan. If they're listening to you talk for an hour, they're going to come see you live. Also, start a show in Chicago. When I lived in New York before, I started a show and I think that was very helpful. And I think you gotta be very disciplined with social media. You gotta be like, "I'm going to post 2-3 reels a week," and you just gotta do it. You can't slack. You gotta just figure out a way to make 2-3 quality jokes, crowd work, or podcast clips every week. Until you break through, you have to be very relentless and on a schedule cause the algorithm does reward regularity. And it's gonna suck; you're gonna have videos that get 100 likes every time, but if they're good quality, one will break through eventually. A lot of comedy is just not quitting. There's so many times where I wanted to quit comedy – losing money hosting in Cedar Rapids, Iowa – but I didn't quit, and people I know who were funnier than me did quit. And if you quit, there's a 0% chance you'll make it. I mean, there's probably only a 1% chance without quitting, but if you quit, it's over. But also, a lot of comedians should quit. So keep that in mind as well.

I feel like so much of it really is just not quitting.

Yeah, get a little better, keep writing jokes. People are worried, like, "Oh, should I post a joke? I'm going to burn it!" First of all, no one really cares because there's so much content, it's not

that big of a deal. If it's a good joke, people want to hear it again. And number two, your new jokes should be better than that joke. Oh, that's your best joke? Well, you should be able to write a better joke. If that's your best joke forever, you're not gonna make it in comedy. Every joke you write should be your new best joke, basically. I think people are a little too precious about, "Oh, I don't want to post my stuff!" Well, then no one's going to see it. Who are you saving it for exactly? Comedy Central doesn't exist anymore. You're not going to get a Netflix deal with 3,000 followers. You have to post. The lesson is just post. Just post.

And last time you had that super unrealistic goal of 40-50k followers. What's your new unrealistic goal for three years from now?

I would hope that I don't have to do any editing anymore – that that is all out of my hands. And I would hope that I'd have a special on a streaming service. It's weird, I've kind of achieved most of my dreams in comedy. The rest is just playing with house money, honestly. I just want to be really honest and funny; I want to keep getting funnier on stage. I think a lot of comics plateau at a certain point and I don't want to let that happen. I want to always get better. I might not be the most famous, but I'll be the funniest. That's my goal.

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Comedians Recognizing Comedians

OWEN DAMON

"Owen is back in Chicago after being away for the summer. He's young but already has an outstanding work ethic and is such a naturally gifted joke writer - just watch his roast battles. Kid is definitely going places and I'm excited to watch his journey."

RICH GOMEZ

"Rich know how to have fun and be professional simultaneously. His act is unique and silly but tight and polished. Very funny, great hair."

DAN GARCIA

"Dan is truly one of the nicest and hardest working comics in the scene. He produces more shows than I can keep track of and is always willing to give advice and guidance to anyone. In addition to being extremely generous in buying rounds of drinks and shots, he's an all around great dude and exceptionally funny."

SAM DICKE

"Funny, unique, and thoughtful. Doing *his* version of comedy and that rocks."

LAURA HUGG

"I met Laura a few years ago and in that time she has become easily one of the most fun comics on the scene to watch. She has this weird, rambling style and innocent persona where you feel like maybe she doesn't know what she is doing. Then, bam! She hits you with a punchline that is so sharp and original, you don't see it coming."

RYAN KUSHNER

"He does brilliant, meta one-liners with an understated style and he just looks funny, like a young Bob Newhart (sorry, Ryan!). One of my favorite jokes of Ryan's is, "Here's a funny thought.... (super long pause...) Oh, gosh, I wish you guys could see this!"

SAM FROUM

"Sam is the youngest comedian in the open mic scene with joke writing chops beyond most of us. He's constantly grinding and improving and is clearly dedicated to his craft. I'm excited to see what he does with his career. Dude is going places."

Comedians Recognizing Comedians

TOMMY SAXTON

"This kid is on his grind and his hard work is paying off. He's finally started booking gigs and he deserves every spot he earns. Is putting in the time and it shows!"

KAT DIAZ

"Not only is she a hilarious comic with great stage presence, she brings warmth and positivity wherever she goes, especially when she hosts at Harrigan's."

KJ WHITEHEAD

"KJ runs several independent shows that feature LGBTQ+ artists. Mostly featuring standups but also mixing in poets and musicians. She also carves out space for sober shows. She was featured in the Netflix Coming Out documentary and has been performing for 11+ years. She gives opportunities to newbies and vets alike and all her productions pay and pay WELL."

REY TANG

"Rey Tang burst onto the scene and is multi talented in comedy doing it all improv, sketch, standup. She runs an awesome open mic at Pizza Mic. Where she gives ample stage time AND feeds the comics."

JACKSON WHITE

"Jackson is an excellent joke writer that couples his material with an affable stage presence. He finds unique premises and drills them to completion. He's also started producing a great stand up show, giving other comics more stage time. On stage, he's a force to be reckoned with. Off stage, he's the gentlest man you could hope to meet. God bless him."

Comedians Recognizing Comedians

VALERIE NICOLETTE

"Val makes the room fun the moment she takes the stage. Her personal material is hilariously relatable, I've seen her make all sorts of people laugh. She's also very supportive of other comics, even the ones that maybe don't deserve it so much."

LAUREN WARWICK

"She inspires me to be a better writer, and is just plain old nice to everyone in the scene."

TITO

"The most welcoming, kind, motivating, and inspirational force in the Chicago comedy scene. Underneath those vests and fingerless gloves is a heart of gold."

TYLER FOWLER

"Tyler has a new solid 10 minute set every month, he's one of the most consistent comics out there. It's only a matter of time until this guy blows up!"

JIM CONLON

"Jim has been steadily growing over the past year as one of the best joke writers in the scene. Really takes his time developing a joke and continues to gain confidence in his stage presence. Love watching him and what his brain comes up with."

HARRY JENSEN

"Runs a great mic at Surge on Tuesday's and consistently crushes any chance he gets."

**HAVE SUGGESTIONS?
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