

The Art of Comedy



Starring:



Comedy can be found almost anywhere in our daily life, and a quick lighthearted laugh can really lift us up as we continue through our day. However, some take comedy a little more seriously, and make comedy rather than wait for it to come to them. An artist pays attention to the world around them and transforms the mundane into the extraordinary; the role of a comedian is no different. Recently I had the good fortune to interview two comedians and get their take on the power of laughter to uplift, transform and why now, more than ever, the art of comedy is such serious business.

Christine O'Leary is a Connecticut based, Streamed Live Show Producer, Stand Up Comedian, Host, Personality, Undercover Roaster, Auctioneer, Philanthropist and Corporate Comedy Coach. But if you have ever met her in person then you know she radiates positive energy and that a more accurate description of her might be along the lines of "force of nature". Christine is a self-proclaimed "Joy Junkie" and seems bent on trying to make the world a kinder, more connected place one person at a time. Having seen Christine interact with celebrities such as Jimmy Fallon and Carson

Kressley (while shooting a Bravo show based on her comedy) to people she meets on the street, everyone seems to feel her magic. Perhaps it's because as a comedy teacher she bestows this personal connection and genuine care on all her students, and her belief that truly everyone has the potential to learn comedy that her classes are so successful.

Christine has taught 58 sold out comedy workshops over the span of eight years, each of them lasting seven weeks and culminating in a graduation night performance in front of a live audience where they can display their knowledge of the art. The courses are aimed at "panning for gold", which is her phrase for teaching students to identify life experiences that will become precious comedy material. During the course of the class, students write, read aloud, and rewrite material under Christine's guidance and her teaching credo that "comedy is about three things, a truth, a problem, and a feeling". The energy of performance night is intense, and nerves can run high, but the reward is unlike any other feeling and Christine says it's as if her students are "born onstage." In addition to acquiring solid comedic experience through the workshop, her students report also gaining significant confidence to make meaningful friendships and as a graduate myself, I can attest to this wholeheartedly.



Just as artwork has been making its ways to the walls of offices and workplace, the art of comedy is also making its way here out of necessity. Noticing the dissatisfaction, mass resignations and record workplace dissatisfaction post pandemic, Christine began working with CEO's, executives and company cultures to facilitate a renewed perspective through increased fun, calibration and employee engagement. After working with Christine as a Corporate Comedy Coach, the results of these "company resets" are visible not only through employee satisfaction but also through a company's bottom line. "Doing this work is my greatest good, knowing that I can affect a CEO who guides and impacts the corporate culture for 16,000 people excites my soul, it is my joy to get workplace energy realigned."

Another passion for Christine is event hosting for not-for-profit groups such as Ms

President, a non-partisan initiative dedicated to inspiring young girls to aim for the highest civic leadership positions, and Ability Beyond, a group aimed at empowering differently abled people to live full and rewarding lives. I met with her in late April the morning after she hosted the Ability Beyond Gala. Her voice was still raspy from all the singing, laughter, dancing and she was joyously exhausted or as she says "still high from all the energy". By the end of the evening, to the surprise of Ability Beyond's team, \$500,000 dollars in donations had been raised, proving that the art of comedy can be serious business after all.

Dave Konig is by all accounts a creative phenom; standup comedian, three-time Emmy award winner, published author (Good Luck, Mr. Gorsky a comedic novel about the drug and crime filled streets of NYC in the 1970's), and a TV and stage actor. Dave also combines both visual art and his knowledge of



comedy as a successful fine artist, working in oil paint and displaying at the RPAC Gallery on Main Street in Ridgefield.

When asked why he thinks he became funny, Dave replies he believes “it’s something you’re born with.” I dig a little deeper to discover if Dave had any difficult childhood experiences (in support of the theory that childhood pain makes people funny) he does admit that during his childhood he moved a whopping seventeen times. Due to constantly needing to make new friends, being funny seemed a more attainable skill for young Dave than learning to fight. He then confides the frequent moving essentially forced him to miss fourth grade and years later when asked about the details of Abe Lincoln’s assassination by his young son he silently thought to himself “Assassinated! So that’s

what happened to that guy...”

After researching Dave it’s hard to imagine a performer with such a diverse range of comedic experiences. From his three-time Emmy award winning show “Subway Q&A”, to appearing on the wildly popular “Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”, writing his own one man off Broadway show titled “Hebrew School



Dropout,” performing stand-up comedy from venues such as Foxwoods to Atlantic City and performing as DJ Vince Fontaine in the Broadway version of “Grease.” More recently however, Dave seems particularly excited about his upcoming appearance with DryBar comedy known for its “always clever, always clean” style. DryBar is an excellent opportunity for any comic as they have an extensive reach through their YouTube channel and various other streaming options. Dave’s personal 30-minute special which was filmed last year is due to be released later this year.

Dave’s current project is a musical review he’s working on with pianist, composer and conductor Elliott Finkel titled “The King of the Bronx.” It’s a tale about New Yorker’s experience living through the darkest times of the pandemic and the possibility of coming out of seemingly impossibly and uncertain times on the other side into the light, humor, and hope; a reminder we need now more than ever. Initially, it was Finkel who encouraged Dave to use his paintings as the catalyst for the play; each scene being based on a character from different oil paintings he painted during Covid. (My jaw drops to learn Dave, such a skilled painter only began painting 2 years ago). Currently, the read throughs are being very positively reviewed by invited audiences and the show is in its final stages of development.

Dave is looking forward to a NYC production of “The King of the Bronx” in the fall and possibly catching up on some of the American History he missed in fourth grade. Davekonig.com for all things Dave Konig, and www.rpacgallery.com/dave-konig for his art.

For more information about Christine please visit www.christineoleary.com ●