



The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006

Because Three Is The Funny Number

For Immediate Release:

The San Francisco Improv Festival

For Immediate Release

Attention: Shaun Landry

621 Natoma Street

San Francisco, CA 94103

415-863-1076

improvalliance@gmail.com or shaunlandry@gmail.com

www.sfimprovfestival.com

For Calendar Listing:

When: All Shows 8pm Doors Open 7:00 Thursday through Saturday June 15 – July 29 2006

What: Theater, Events, Comedy, Improv

Who: The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006

Where: The Buriel Clay Theater 762 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

Cost: \$20.00. \$12.00 Students/Seniors/TBA/Improv Alliance. \$10.00 Groups over ten

Public info: (415) 863-1076 buy tickets online at www.sfimprovfestival.com www.Tickeweb.com or at the Tix Booth Union Square

Contact: Shaun Landry (415) 863-1076 improvalliance@gmail.com or shaunlandry@gmail.com

Breakdown of Performances:

True Fiction Magazine (SF) & ImprovBoston	Opening Weekend June 15-17 8:00PM
15-Minutes (SF) & Massive Creativity (Houston TX)	June 22-24 8:00PM
Un-Scripted (SF) & JoKyR & Jesster (Salt Lake)	June 29 – July 1 8:00PM
Revolving Madness (SF) & Second City The Group (LA)	July 6-8 8:00PM
Dad's Garage (Atlanta) & I Eat Pandas (New York)	July 13-15 8:00PM
Warth & Todd (NY) and Waiting for Ennis Cotter (Boston)	July 20-22 8:00PM
Nation of Improv (LA) & Oui Be Negroes (SF)	Closing Weekend July 27-29 8:00PM
SPECIAL PERFORMANCE Total Improv For Kids	July 29th 6:00PM

For more information on The San Francisco Improv Festival or interviews and pictures of any of the ensembles, performers or teachers, please call producer Shaun Landry at 415-863-1076.

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The San Francisco Improv Alliance Presents

The Third Annual San Francisco Improv Festival 2006!

Seven Weeks of Improv From the Bay and Beyond!

The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006 is back for its third year with more incredible improvisation from some of the finest local, national and international comedy ensembles to The Bay Area!

Also Having in attendance, national improvisational instructors (Second City Los Angeles Artistic Director David Razowsky and Second City Chicago Alumni and Hothouse STC Artistic director Todd Stashwick,) The San Francisco Improv Festival is currently the longest running improv festival in the country, and one of the few improv festivals that pays its ensembles to perform!

Started in 2004 by Shaun Landry & Sam Shaw (respectively Oui Be Negroes and The Sam Shaw Show) the first festival premiered with appearances by the Annoyance Theater Chicago, Kihckercast Project New York (with local Oakland resident Topping Haggerty), and the prestigious True Fiction Magazine. The Second year saw The Upright Citizens Brigade and appearances by local favorites 3 For All and Television Appearances by the PAX TV's World Cup Comedy!

This year the festival is showcasing more out of town ensembles as well as representation from the finest improv ensembles in the Bay Area. This year, the fest has also moved to the beautiful 210 seat Buriel Clay Theater in San Francisco!

This year festival also brings a full on Summer Improv Program for Children! "The San Francisco Improv Festival Youth Program is a Seven week program teaching youth improvisation...which culminates into a performance with all Kid Improv Theater Company **Total Improv For Kids** (Los Angeles)

"Three is indeed the funny number and number three is going to be seven weeks full of surprises" says Producer Shaun Landry. "To have the kind of performers, teachers and ensembles coming to San Francisco for the first time paired with incredible Bay improv troupes is a joy to produce. We are geared to bring this festival again to the theatre going public"

Highlights of this year festival includes appearances by **The Second City Los Angeles The Group, African American Improv Closing Weekend with Nation of Improv (LA) and Oui Be Negroes (San Francisco) and the return for the third year of San Francisco favorite improv ensemble True Fiction Magazine with Boston's favorite improv ensemble "ImprovBoston"**

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006

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The Entire Line-Up of the San Francisco Improv Festival Includes:

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15-Minutes (SF) & Massive Creativity (Houston TX)	June 22-24 8:00PM
Un-Scripted (SF) & JoKyR & Jesster (Salt Lake)	June 29 – July 1 8:00PM
Revolving Madness (SF) & Second City The Group (LA)	July 6-8 8:00PM
Dad's Garage (Atlanta) & I Eat Pandas (New York)	July 13-15 8:00PM
Warth & Todd (NY) and Waiting for Ennis Cotter (Boston)	July 20-22 8:00PM
Nation of Improv (LA) & Oui Be Negroes (SF)	Closing Weekend July 27-29 8:00PM
SPECIAL PERFORMANCE Total Improv For Kids	July 29 th 6:00PM

Dates: June 15 – July 29

The Buriel Clay Theater 742 Fulton Street, San Francisco.

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\$20.00. \$12.00 TBA/Seniors/Students/Improv Alliance Members. \$10.00 Groups over 10.

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2005 Opening Weekend June 15-17 ImprovBoston (Boston) & True Fiction Magazine (San Francisco)



The San Francisco Improv Festival is pleased to open its festival with Coast-to-Coast Première Improv Companies. Both of these ensembles are loved in their native hometown as the finest improv companies each city has to offer, and The SFIF 2006 is proud to have them open

ImprovBoston – Boston, MA – Critically acclaimed improv Ensemble ImprovBoston brings it two person improvisational show !Ay Diego! (with Artistic Director Will Lurea and Zabeth Russell featured in the movie “Mystic River”) ImprovBoston has been claimed as “The Best Improv in Boston” in the Boston Herald www.improvboston.com

True Fiction Magazine San Francisco

For the third year in a row The San Francisco Improv Festival is pleased to have True Fiction Magazine return to the San Francisco Improv

Festival. True Fiction Magazine, originally inspired by the over-blown passions of the 30s and 40s pulp novels, takes improvised theatre to new heights each year. Pushing the realm of storytelling, TFM takes the audience on a wild ride into unknown territory that titillates the senses and blows the mind.

"Inspired inspiration!" -San Francisco Chronicle

"Surreal inventive plots!" -LA Times

"An immensely satisfying theatrical experience!" -Daily Variety a www.truefictionmagazine.com

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2005 Week Two June 22-24
Massive Creativity (Houston, TX) & 15Minutes (San Francisco)



The San Francisco Improv Festival presents week two of incredible Long Form Improvisation by two groups hailing from The Bay and Deep in the heart of Texas!

Massive Creativity – Houston Texas – Through creation of longform improvisation ensembles, and producing longform improvisation performances, Massive Creativity seeks to create unique, theatrical experiences that are powerful, funny, serious, raw, real, thought-provoking, and relentlessly. Their performances are ideal for anyone who wants to experience a unique brand of affordable live theater. They are completely improvised and unscripted, and inspired by an audience member's suggestion. Every show is different, because we take a new suggestion for every show. Be ready for the profane and the profound. www.massivecreativity.com

15 Minutes - San Francisco - The San Francisco Improv Festival is pleased to have 15-Minutes return to the San Francisco Improv Festival. They are a long-form improvisation group. Meaning that 15 Minutes improvises scene based on

character and relationship based improvisation. Who would love this show? Anyone...as long as you are not easily offended. We do not set out to offend, but we do not edit ourselves. Our show would best be described as "R" rated. An audience favorite at last year's festival when they appeared with The Upright Citizens Brigade Touring Company! www.15-minutes.net

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2005 Week Three June 29-July 1st JoKyR & Jesster (Salt Lake City, UT) & Un-Scripted Theater Company (San Francisco)

JoKyR & Jesster
Un-Scripted Theater
San Francisco

&

JoKyR & Jesster
Salt Lake City, Utah

3rd Weekend
June 29, 30 &
July 1st
8PM

Un-Scripted
THEATER COMPANY

The San Francisco Improv Festival presents week three presents "Best of 2005" by bringing back two improvisational ensembles that proved our best week of last years festival! We are thrilled to have both of these ensembles back for 2006

JoKyR & Jesster – Salt Lake City, UT – Featuring Jesse Parent (creator of the new improvisational format the Hook, being used by improviser across the country and here in San Francisco) and Joseph Kyle Rogan, JoKyR & Jesster is Utah's only international touring long form improv group. Producing intelligent comedy, energetic drama, and world-class improvisational theatre at venues throughout Salt Lake City these two talented men have become the Improvisational Festival favorites with their creative two person improvisational format. They are also scheduled to perform at this years Chicago Improv Festival (www.cif.com) This is a **must see performance** www.jokyrandjesster.com

Un-Scripted Theater Company - San Francisco – With their 2005 Season full of hit improvisational shows including "The Impossible Film Project" "The Long and Short of it", "Let It Snow" and "Bawdy Shakespeare, Un-Scripted Theater is fast becoming the premiere San Francisco improvisational Ensemble in San Francisco! The San Francisco improv Festival is pleased to have them back highlighting the best of their 2006 Season! www.un-scripted.com

Dates: Thurs-Sat Nights June 29- July 1st

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2005 Week Four July 6 - 8

Revolving Madness (San Francisco) The Second City Los Angeles The Group (Los Angeles)



The San Francisco Improv Festival presents week four Second City Style Improv with San Francisco's Revolving Madness and of course...the Big Daddy of Improv The Second City's Los Angeles The Group!

Revolving Madness – San Francisco - Revolving Madness is dedicated to performing not only their unique style of improvisation, but to producing their own original works as well as new and classical material that reflects on their training, personality and ideals. Long-form improvisation with no script, no structure and no suggestions — just plain madness.

Revolving Madness has played to rave reviews at The Toronto Improv Festival and will be performing its second year at the San Francisco Fringe Festival 2006. The San Francisco Improv Festival is pleased to have them! <http://www.revolvingmadness.com>

The Second City Los Angeles: The Group – Los Angeles, CA – Under the direction of Second City Artistic Director David Razowsky, The Group performs Second City Style improvisational theater. This group of talented improvisers brings classic improv in the traditional of the Big Daddy of improv in the country. <http://secondcity.com/?id=theatres/losangeles>

Dates: Thurs-Sat Nights July 6 - 8

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2005 Week Five July 13 - 15 Dad's Garage (Atlanta, GA) | Eat Pandas (New York, NY)

The San Francisco Improv Festival presents week five with The Out of Towners Series! San Francisco gets treated to exciting out of town improv by two faves from Atlanta and New York!

Dad's Garage – Atlanta, GA – They have been making Atlanta's life better for 11 years. Founded by an incredible talent of improvisers (including Cal Shakes own artistic director Sean Daniels), Dad's Garage innovative theater located in Atlanta Georgia has received highly acclaimed reviews both in Atlanta and Nationally for its innovative style of improvisation. www.dadsgarage.com

I Eat Pandas: The Group - New York – *I Eat Pandas does what it takes Andrew Lloyd Weber YEARS to do... crap out a musical from start to finish*– Time Out Magazine Tony's Critique Pick New York February 2006.

Based in New York, the trio creates instant, spontaneous, sparkly musicals before your very eyes complete with dancing, singing and dramatic glances. And it's all based on a simple suggestion from you, the audience! Created in 2004 as part of the *Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre's* annual 3-on-3 competition; the first time performing together they took 2nd place and ended their show with a standing ovation.

Performers Glennis McMurray, Travis Ploeger and Eliza Skinner have performed all over New York and surrounding states and in 2005 they were nominated for an Emerging Comics of New York award for Best Musical Act. They have won many challenges on the UCB stage during Cage Match (www.cage-match.com) and were invited to perform in the Chicago and Providence Improv Festivals and New York's own Del Close Marathon. www.ieatpandas.com

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2005 Week Six July 20 - 22 Warth & Todd (New York, NY) Waiting For Ennis Cotter (Boston, MA)



The San Francisco Improv Festival presents week Six with East Costers Series! San Francisco gets treated to exciting out of town improv by two faves from straight from around the Atlantic Ocean!

Warth & Todd – New York, NY – Warth & Todd is the two person Ensemble of Betsy Todd and Dave Warth of New York. Known for their incredible work in New York at The Magnet Theater's Ampers& Duo Improv show, Warth and Todd intelligent two person improv ahs been hailed in New York and witty, smart and always funny!

Waiting for Ennis Cotter- Boston, MA – Waiting for Ennis Cotter s a fully improvised show, accompanied by a live accordion player. The cast goes on a journey that begins on the night of the 20th anniversary of Ennis' departure. Soliciting suggestions from other bar patrons (the audience), Fionnula, Dedonna and the beloved pub keep Sean weave the suggestions into their banter. Throughout the course of the evening, and several improvised flashbacks, you will see what two desperate

women will do for one man.

Waiting for Ennis Cotter has been performed throughout Boston, originally as part of the Immediate Theatre Collective's second Directors Series. Since their debut, they have independently brought the show to the 2004 In & Out of Towner's festival in NYC and more recently during the spring and summer of 2005, the Providence Improv Festival, Del Close Marathon (NYC), the Toronto International Improv Festival and the Chicago Improv Festival. *Waiting for Ennis Cotter* is Cathleen Carr, Kiley Fitzgerald & Tim Paul with Peter Hanlon on accordion.

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006 Closing Weekend July 27 - 29 Nation of Improv (Los Angeles, CA) Oui Be Negroes (San Francisco, CA)



The San Francisco Improv Festival presents closes its seven-week festival with African American Improvisational Theater. See what they say by Improv is Jazz by seeing two incredible Improv Ensembles of Color at The African American Cultural Complex.

Nation of Improv – Los Angeles, CA – The all African American Improv Company in Los Angeles! How the show works: Khris will take your suggestion, pass it down the court to Dave. Dave will fake the shot then bounce pass it to Marquis in a little 'pick & roll' move. As Quis backs the suggestion down into the low post, he, he...he shovels it out to Tom at the top of the key... Then, Tom cuts down the lane where he notices that Ron is open... throwing the suggestion up like an alley-oop to Ron who finishes it off with a thunder dunk that rattles the rim!

It is brother basketball improv thing that only that you don't understand, but will when you see them.

The Nation of Improv hosts some of the most talented African American improvisational men around (including former and current members of Oui Be Negroes and The Second City Chicago) www.nationofimprov.com

Oui Be Negroes - San Francisco, CA – Oui Be Negroes is the Original African American Sketch Comedy/Improvisational Company in the country making its second appearance at the San Francisco Improv Festival. For over eleven years, OBN has brought its brand of social political improvisational humor to audiences around the country and internationally. The Negroes have done critically acclaimed shows since its move to San Francisco in 2000 from Chicago including Pigeat Markham, Thanks for everything, Spike Lee, Absolute Negritude, Improvadelic and its acclaimed Sold out run at The San Francisco Fringe Festival. From New York, to Amsterdam to here in the Bay, The Negroes are sure to give you improv comedy. On the Black Hand side..

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The San Francisco Improv Festival Improv Youth Program

The San Francisco Improv Festival is pleased to announce its seven-week program for youth and teens 10-18.

Lead by festival producer, San Francisco Improv Alliance founder and Artistic Director of OBN Shaun Landry, The Program will lead children through the many styles of improvisational theater over the seven-week series. Ms Landry, along with master class teachers from ensembles participating in the festival, will bring students the basics of acting and improvisation which will culminate into a final performance by the critically acclaimed all kids improve ensemble from Los Angeles "Total Improv For Kids" www.totalimprov.com

- **The Rules of Improvisation** Youth will be taught basic theater and improvisational exercises of trust, acceptance, reacting, responding, listening and team building (group mind)
- **Short Form Improvisation** Our students will learn from the best improvisational instructors the basic short form games. From Viola Spolin to Keith Johnstone and all games in-between, our students will leave our classes knowing the games currently popular in Short Form Improvisation
- **Long Form Improvisation** Teaching Long Form Improvisation to youth is an incredible process that gives children the creativity to perform instant theater on the spot. The SFIF Youth program will teach all the current formats used in longform improvisation including The Harold, The Armando, The Hook, Deconstruction, and Free Form Long Form. A great sounding board for young actors who also wish to write.
- **Musical Improvisation** This incredible class gives youth the confidence to sing and sing out loud! It also gives them the chance to create their own songs as they go along! Taught by professional improvisational musical instructors this part of the SFIF Program is guaranteed to be a favorite!
- **Improvisational Show Creation** During the seven-week program, students will learn how to craft and create a full improvisational show using all the formats taught. This is essential for the new actor in learning how to work within a creative ensemble setting.
- **Final Student Performance**
Final Student Performance will occur immediately after last class from 5:00 - 7:00PM at The Buriel Clay Theater with Los Angeles all youth Improvisational Ensemble Total Improv For Kids.

Dates: Seven Weeks Saturdays June 17- 29 The Buriel Clay Theater 762 Fulton Street San Francisco. Full Registration \$600.00. \$300.00 TBA/ Improv Alliance Members. The Martin de Matt Scholarship Available. For full Registration Information to www.sfimprovfestival.com or call (415) 863-1076

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006 Former Media Coverage



Out of their heads

Bay Area improv players have a winning strategy for turning San Francisco into a world-class performance city: making it up as they go along.
By Robert Avila (excerpt)

Herding the troupes

Shaun Landry and Sam Shaw first met in Boston in 1997 while she was on tour with *Oui Be Negroes*. That same year Shaw moved to San Francisco. He eventually started organizing improv jams in small, inexpensive spaces (of which there were, naturally, very few at the time; Shaw admits that when he decided to move here, he did so under the mistaken impression that Silicon Valley was somewhere outside of Los Angeles). Everyone who showed up would pitch in \$5 for the rent on the space.

Bryce Byerley, a local actor and improviser, became an enthusiast of these low-budget sessions. "Pieces suffer when there's no audience in improv," he says. "Without that connection to give you your building blocks and the feedback of laughter or interest, it seems like an unfinished piece. That's why jams are popular. You have the freedom to take chances and to suck, as in rehearsal, along with the feedback of an audience."

After Landry and Summers moved to San Francisco in 2000, Shaw and Landry teamed up to establish a regular jam at the recently defunct Spanganga and to produce shows. For their first production, they sponsored an improv troupe from Japan, Yellow Man Group. Needing something to put before the word

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006

Because Three Is The Funny Number

(cont)

"presents" in the advertising, according to Shaw, they decided to form the San Francisco Improv Cooperative. Soon afterward they asked Byerley to be its third member.

Byerley – who performs in SFIC's festival with Becky Haycox as the "brother-sister" team the Babcocks (the brainchild of Shaw, who also directs them) – remembers the larger impetus behind the cooperative being Shaw and Landry's dismay at the relative lack of improv troupes at that time and the minimal communication that went on between those that did exist. Breaking down those barriers and networking seemed absolutely necessary. "For independent troupes back in 2000, 2001, 2002, performance spaces were hard to find, rehearsal spaces were most often someone's living room, and instruction came from rereading *Improv* or *Truth in Comedy*," Byerley says. "We believed that if we could pool our knowledge and provide access to affordable performance and rehearsal spaces and get the actors *paid*, improv could take off like a rocket in San Francisco."

The new wave of improvisers hugely benefits from the dot-bomb, which made performance spaces more readily available again. (Daniel Gamburg's improvised film, *IPO* – a wryly intelligent, extremely well acted portrait of the city during the dot-com era – is an accordingly apt SFIC festival offering. Enabling these up-and-coming performers are organizations like SFIC, which offer a support structure crucial to building audiences that can sustain the better troupes. Such a structure becomes all the more vital considering improv troupes, as a rule, tend to be unwieldy and fragile propositions – "like herding kitties," according to Killam, who specifically credits Landry with energetically supplying encouragement and opportunities to local groups, which "seemed to spawn an upsurge in the number of shows" after she moved here in 2000.

"Since a lot of the existing troupes now know one another, and Sam and Shaun have access to many good performance spaces, it's a lot easier to put on shows," Byerley says. "Now we can pair and triple up with other troupes. The co-op helps find the venue and get you the support – house crew, ushers, stage managers, and techs – needed. Plus, since we are rather aggressive in our ideal that actors need to be paid, everyone takes home a part. It may not be much, but that sort of reinforcement not only strengthens the drive to do more shows but also to put on a quality, professional show."

"Having people see improv, that's the whole point," Landry says. "I don't care what format you're doing. If it's an improvised movie, I'm down for it. If you're doing improv on a blue blanket for free in the middle of the city, it's going to be promoted." At the same time, SFIC is determined to avoid the "inbred" phenomenon: the same groups continually playing the same venues. Landry and Shaw draw on their national and international connections to bring in troupes from Chicago, New York City, and Japan and to pair them up with local troupes. They also try to foster variety with a loose organizational structure that allows individual groups to do their own thing. "I want to create a scene that's allowed to spread out," Shaw says, "with many different leaders, many different voices. A lot of stuff is going on with genre work over at BATS, which I think is exciting. I'm hoping we can add fuel to that fire. There's so much in improv that isn't explored."

"It's exciting," Byerley enthuses. "Like being in Chicago in the '50s during the birth of the Compass Players." That statement may be a measure of the excitement taking hold of improvisers around town rather than a meaningful historical parallel. But strangely, as if to acknowledge the promise in the smorgasbord of improv then on display, one of the brightest lights of the Compass years alighted on San Francisco. Standing a bit incongruously at a lectern a few weeks ago as the guest of City Arts and Lectures, Elaine May, a cool and fit-looking 71, took questions from an adoring audience at Herbst Theatre. In answering with the quick-witted yet casual charm of a raconteur, the respected screenwriter and actor hinted at her artistic and professional roots in an earlier career as a brilliant improviser – work

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showcased in the legendary comedy duo Nichols and May, whose hold on the imagination after more than 40 years was evidenced by the number of questions about those days.

A weekly short-form jam on Tuesday nights is the newest addition to SFIC's offerings, now that the Monday long-form jam has become so popular. "Sam came up with the idea," Landry says. "Let's do a night of a thousand games!" And of course we'll never get there, but we'll try." Each week, a heaping helping of the games improvisers play—and there are hundreds, maybe thousands—get written on strips of paper and placed in a plastic receptacle imposingly christened the Beer Cup of Death. Next, according to Landry, "People get up [onstage and draw from the cup], and we explain the games. It has that giddy, childlike feeling. It's fun to do. It's going back old school. Yeah, sure, it's going to grow into something else, that's what we expect. That's what we hope."

That last thought sparks another as the tape runs out on my recorder. She continues racing ahead, however, to flesh out just what that "something else" might entail. A true improviser. "Goddamn!" she shouts, in desperate need of a pen, "Are you writing this down?"

'San Francisco Improv Festival' runs through June 26, Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m., Next Stage Theater, 1620 Gough, S.F., and Climate Theatre, 285 Ninth St., S.F. \$12-\$15. (415) 863-1076, www.sfimprovfestival.com.

ePicks

entertainment tip sheet

updated Thursdays

San Francisco Improv Festival (Though June 26th)

Say What?

Anna Mantzaris, special to SF Gate

On Saturday night, I watched a man make love to an orange, a group speak in the language of Stretch and some folks ride around in an imaginary clown car. The super-talented Annoyance Theatre proved anything can and does happen at the [San Francisco Improv Festival](#) (OK, so that orange thing was planned). Presented by the San Francisco Improv Co-Operative, this year's 12-week lineup includes top-notch spontaneity with 13 off-the-cuff groups, ranging from ensembles from Chicago and New York City to locals. Upcoming performances include the Kihckercast Project from NYC, boasting a "humanistic style of improv," and San Francisco's Bare Witness Productions, featuring short and feature improvised films. Magic Eight Ball says: Chances are very good you'll like what you see.

For more information on The San Francisco Improv Festival or interviews and pictures of any of the ensembles, performers or teachers, please call producer Shaun Landry at 415-863-1076. You may also email us at improvalliance@gmail.com or shaunlandry@gmail.com For our media release online, please go to www.sfimprovfestival.com

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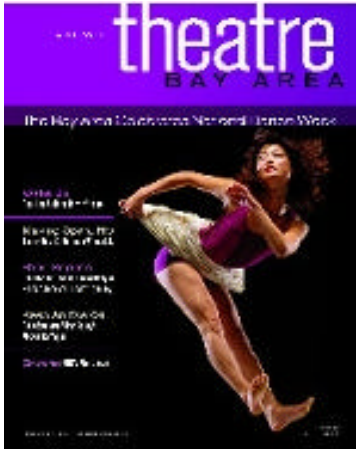
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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006

Because Three Is The Funny Number



**Theatre Bay Area Callboard
San Francisco Improv Festival
Theatre Bay Area
April 2004
Karen McKevitt**

A stockbroker who likes to be spanked. A family reunion at Thanksgiving. Disgruntled sports writers covering the theatre beat. Get your suggestions ready, because the brand-new San Francisco Improv Festival hits the Next Stage, Climate theatre and Venue 9 for 12 solid weeks of spontaneity. Featuring local and national troupes, the festival sprang from the San Francisco Improv Co-Operative, which started in 2001 at Spanganga, presenting improv jams. It soon outgrew those digs and moved to the Climate.

One of the festival's big names is Chicago's Annoyance Theatre, best known for its Co-Ed Prison Sluts. Annoyance Theatre: Road Trip! is straight improv, and one of the company's members, Mick Napier (also of Second City fame) is teaching master classes. Pharmasupial, the creation of local Dan Wilson, is improv without suggestion. IF improv happens without audience suggestions, the how...? Well, you'll have to take their word for it. In the two-person comedy category are Chicago's Defiant Thomas Brothers and SF's Muy Fuerte and Black and Tan Improv. Muy Fuerte (Mike Geometti and Charles Durazo) takes long-form into some social territory but eschews didacticism for just plain fun. Black and Tan Improv is a women-of-color duo featuring Shaun Landry (the festival's producer) and Ana Elizondo-also of Oui Be Negroes, the world's only African American improv and sketch comedy ensemble (which also performs at the fest). And any improv festival wouldn't be complete without San Francisco's True Fiction Magazine. In a full evening of theatre, True Fiction takes audience suggestions and creates structurally complex stories inspired by 1930's and '40 pulp fiction.

At last count, press time, the festival's events numbered about 15, but hey, and its improv - you never know what you'll get.

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The San Francisco Improv Festival 2006

Because Three Is The Funny Number



The San Francisco Bay Guardian
8 Days a Week
Hot Spot
April 14-21, 2004

THE ECONOMY IS horrible, Bush is still in charge (shudder), and gas may as well be three bucks a gallon. Thank goodness the San Francisco Improv Co-Operative's San Francisco Improv Festival is roaring into town to lighten the mood a little. Actually, the fest looks to lighten the mood a *lot*, with a staggering lineup that features 12 weeks of performances by Bay Area ensembles as well as groups from Chicago and New York City. Get to chuckling this week with the Windy City's Annoyance Theatre cast (*The Real Live Brady Bunch*, *Co-Ed Prison Sluts*), who bust out their improv-sketch show *Road Trip!* Spontaneity continues to rule with locals Next Stage Improv Ensemble and the Sam Shaw Show, plus N.Y.'s Kihkericast Project (April 22 through 24); a special edition of Climate Theatre's weekly improv jam with a screening of *The*

Delmonic Interviews, a doc about comedy legend Del Close (April 29 through May 1); improvised films by BareWitness Productions (May 6 through 8); Pharmarsupial and the Babcocks (May 13 through 22); a weekend of "two-person comedy" with Muy Fuerte, Black and Tan Improv, and the Defiant Thomas Brothers (May 27 through 29); a long-form series with New Humor Group and Oui Be Negroes (June 3 through 12); and for the grand finale, S.F. faves True Fiction Magazine (June 17 through 26). Other participants include local luminaries Lucky Dog Theatre (April 29 through May 1, Venue 9, 252 Ninth St., S.F.) and BATS Improv (June 4 through 5, Bayfront Theater, Fort Mason Center, Marina at Laguna, S.F.). If you think about it, the Improv Festival is yet another sign – witness the San Francisco Sketch Comedy Festival (now a January staple), the reopening of venues like Cobb's Comedy Club and the Purple Onion, etc. – that comedy is on the rise in the local entertainment scene. Hey, no time like the present for some humor therapy!

April 15-June 26. Shows Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m., Next Stage, 1620 Gough, S.F.; and Climate Theatre, 285 Ninth St., S.F. \$15. (415) 863-1076, www.sfimprovfestival.com. (Cheryl Eddy)

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