

Joshua Tree International Improv/Comedy Festival Coming To Hi-Desert



Long Prize (Los Angeles, CA) co-owner of 'Red Cow Comedy'



**By Jack Lyons
Theatre and
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If you feel the world is spinning out of control right

about now, then you need a time out. The year 2016 has been a roller-coaster social media experience. All of us about now are in need of a dose of the medicine that heals the blues and calms the nerves – comedy.

The Joshua Tree International Improv/Comedy Festival that opens on Friday, July 8th and performs on Saturday, July 9th and Sunday, July 10th is just the Rx that most doctors would suggest to chase away those blues.

The cream of improv/comedy performers will gather at the Hi-Desert Cultural Center in Joshua Tree located at 61231 Highway 62 – about a half a mile from the entrance to Joshua Tree National Park. Legendary TV and New York Cabaret star/comic Tom Dreeson heads up the festival as host, with

Richard Weiss as emcee plus 40 of the country's top improv/comedy performers.

Festival director Jeanette Knight has assembled a stellar cast who will participate and compete in sketches and skits that will be judged by the audience over the three day festival. So, if you ever felt that you have what it takes to be a judge in a comedy festival of professional performers, then this is definitely your chance to step up.

If you're not up to being a judge then just come as an audience member and enjoy the talents of the performers. Remember, laughter is the tonic that extends our lives on this mortal coil. There are also workshops and seminars being offered to those who seek to improve their social and professional comedy skills. I attended the festival two years ago at the Indio Performing Art Center (IPAC) and had a blast.

Knight has structured the festival into three sections: Friday, July 8th, kicks off with a Gala and social hour featuring heavy hors d'oeuvres



Tom Dreeson (New York, NY)



These are three improv groups that will be performing as part of the festival: Judd (Phoenix, AZ), Improv Collective (Huntington Beach, CA), and I'm a Turtle (Chicago, IL).

and desserts at 5:30 pm, followed four opening night comedy sketch groups:

'Identity Crush', 'The Very Nick & Zack Show', 'ScubaGuys', and 'The Fireturtles'.

Saturday, July 9th begins at 3:00 pm with a new act every 30 minutes that go to 11:00 pm. There are also workshops and seminars being held over the three day festival led by Chelsea Coleman, Andy Harmon, Kate Lillman, and

Richard Weiss; all acclaimed improv professionals.

Sunday, July 10th there is a stand-up comedy act every 15 minutes. You can come and enjoy all of the acts or just those that suit your fancy. Performances run from 3:15 pm to 8:00 pm, ending with the festival awards. Considering that the temperature these days is hovering in the triple digits, the Joshua Tree International Improv/Comedy

Festival sounds like a great way to spend a weekend in the cool and inviting climate of the hi-desert and be entertained in the bargain.

For additional information on Festival Passes and Packages contact Festival Director Jeanette Knight at jknight@hidesertculturalcenter.org or call the Hi-Desert Cultural Center Box Office at 760-366-3777, ext. 1.

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