

UCI Claire Trevor

School of the Arts

NEWS

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FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE
CLAIRE TREVOR SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

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Exploration: Evolution of Improvisation 2023
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COUP DE COMEDY FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF FREE FUN!

UCI Hosts Comedy Festival and GII Exploration: Evolution of Improvisation May 10-13, 2023

IRVINE, Calif. (April 25, 2023) – The Claire Trevor School of the Arts (CTSA) at UC Irvine will host the 10th annual Coup de Comedy Festival, a four-day event with panels, workshops, and performances available for free to the community. This year’s festival will feature over 35 free events (several livestreamed worldwide), which include nearly 100 artists, half of whom are underrepresented in the comedy world, including BIPOC, female and non-binary voices.

The festival will again partner with the Global Improvisation Initiative (GII) to explore the Evolution of Improvisation up until now and present innovations that will impact the future around the world.

“It is amazing that we’ve been sharing this festival for over a decade to inspire our community through laughter,” said Joel Veenstra, professor of teaching and Vice Chair in the Department of Drama. “I feel so blessed to see that the students who created this festival years ago, now with successful careers in comedy, are coming back to share their talents as alumni and professionals in their own right.”

Participants can choose from a wide range of events, including the family-friendly Rockin’ Awesome Improv Show, Feel Your Feet (with a world premiere evolution of Spolin/Sills work entitled “Story Games”), The Resistance, and many more.

Special guests at the festival include Aretha Sills, daughter of Paul Sills and Grand Daughter of Viola Spolin; Theresa Robbins Dudeck, the foremost expert on Keith Johnstone’s life and work; Colin Mochrie from *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*; and the Cast of Amazon Frevee’s comedy *Jury Duty*. Other notable groups include the Latinx Comedy Pachanga from the Ledge Theatre, No MSG Added and Minority Reportz. The Black Version, an all-black ensemble of well-known comedians that performs black versions of popular films, will also host a talkback.

The festival is produced by Veenstra and the 13-year-old student organization Improv Revolution (iRev), which generates creativity, comedy, and community at and around UC Irvine, and now the world.

“During our first trial year of the festival, before it was officially started, we just had two days of events and maybe 30 artists involved. We literally had to call our friends on the day of the events to get an audience. Now we routinely have performances at capacity within our spaces and have extended the reach of both the participants and audiences globally,” said Veenstra. “Our partnership with the GII allows us both international connections and academic inquiry into the nature of improvisation in the past, present, and evolving into the future.”

The event will take place both in-person and online. To reserve a spot for each event, participants can log in to the Sched website using this link: <https://cdc23gii.sched.com>. After logging in, participants can RSVP for each event they would like to attend. Space is limited, so it is recommended that participants reserve their spots as soon as possible. Posts on the event will use the hashtag #CdC23GII.

The Coup de Comedy Festival promises to be a fun and engaging event that celebrates the diverse voices and perspectives in the comedy world. With an impressive lineup of performers and workshops, this festival is a must-see for anyone interested in comedy or improvisation.

About UCI Claire Trevor School of the Arts: As UC Irvine’s creative engine, the Claire Trevor School of the Arts (CTSA) has proven itself to be a national leader in training future generations of artists and scholars who go on to inspire audiences in theaters, galleries and concert halls – as well as in entertainment and technology-related venues throughout the world. CTSA combines artistic training with a top-ranked liberal arts education. It is home to the Departments of Art, Dance, Drama and Music offering 15 undergraduate and graduate degree programs and two minors. CTSA is currently ranked #1 in Affordable Fine Arts, Drama/Theater and Music Degrees by the College Affordability Guide. Courses include extensive studio, workshop and performance experiences; theoretical and historical studies; and arts and technology practices. CTSA's nationally ranked programs begin with training but culminate in original invention. The international and distinguished faculty work across a wide variety of art forms and forge interdisciplinary partnerships with others across the campus. For more information, visit www.arts.uci.edu.

About the University of California, Irvine: Founded in 1965, UCI is the youngest member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. The campus has produced three Nobel laureates and is known for its academic achievement, premier research, innovation and anteater mascot. Led by Chancellor Howard Gillman, UCI has more than 36,000 students and offers 222 degree programs. It’s located in one of the world’s safest and most economically vibrant communities and is Orange County’s second-largest employer, contributing \$5 billion annually to the local economy. For more on UCI, visit www.uci.edu.

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Images:



Caption: UCI student-run comedy troupe Improv Revolution (iRev) hosts members of the Minority Reportz, a diverse line-up of comedians as part of the Coup de Comedy festival.



Caption: Comedy improv ensemble The Resistance, will perform an improvised action/adventure movie as part of the closing night festivities on May 13. (Photo: Skye Schmidt)