

Saturday Night Live Meets CDS in Cyclone Hilarity

By **Kim Sillcox**

We all need a good laugh now and then, which is why Grade 7-9 students at The Country Day School will be taking aim at your funny bone during their first scripted comedy troupe written by students ? The Cyclone City Comedy Revue ? on November 17 and 18.

Since the first week of school they have been creating and scripting their own 'premises', or ideas for scenes, in preparation for performing a series of fantastically funny sketches that use the same improvisational techniques actors at The Second City in Toronto and Chicago have been using for years.

CDS Drama Faculty took a leap of faith this year and outsourced directing duties to actual Second City Improv Instructors, who they are learning from as well. Anne McMaster and Mat Mailandt have been working with the dynamic young cast after school three days a week for the past two months, guiding them through the journey of 'teasing' forth a healthy dose of parody, satire and comedy for the upcoming production.

'Being a teen is tough and if you can't find ways to laugh about it, it's even tougher,' remarks Mat. 'Comedy is what unifies us ? brings us together. Improvisation is a big risk ? a leap of faith.'

On top of that, they both agree that comedy is hard to do. 'It's 95% work and 5% fun ? but so important ? we all need to laugh more.'

Some personal qualities that make for good improvisers include patience, playfulness, strong listening skills, compassion and willingness to make a partner look good. Apparently the CDS cast possess all of these characteristics in spades.

'The students have worked so hard on this,' reports Anne. 'You will see sketches capturing moments from life at the School or how they see the world, including some that tackle popular adolescent themes, technology, ethics and social norms.' Throw in some Pokémon GO and Cyclone City offers everything you would ever want in family friendly show!

Anne and Mat first joined forces while working for the Calgary Improv Festival several years back. Both are professional improvisers, having taught comedy all over the world to high school students and adults. Mat coordinated the Calgary High School Theatresports Championship from 2011 to 2013 and together they started teaching youth and comedy. Mat moved back to Toronto in 2014 and is now an instructor at Second City. Anne followed with her family in 2015, and like Mat, performs regularly at comedy venues throughout Toronto. Anne is also a graduate of the Second City Conservatory.

Indeed, comedy is alive and well at CDS. Join us for some laughs at The Cyclone City Comedy Revue on Thursday, November 17 or Friday, November 18 at 7:00 p.m. in the Performing Arts Centre. Tickets are \$10 and available at www.cds.on.ca/tickets and at the door in advance of the show.