

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EVENT: When ___ Met ___: An Improvised Romantic Comedy
WHO: Baltimore Improv Group
WHEN: Saturday, February 9; Friday, February 15; Saturday February 16; 8pm
WHERE: 1727 N. Charles St, Baltimore, MD
COST: FREE



Baltimore theater hops on the romantic comedy bandwagon

Baltimore comedy performers tackle the rom com trend in *When ___ Met ___: An Improvised Romantic Comedy*

BALTIMORE, MD – Baltimore Improv Group (BIG) presents "When ___ Met ___: An Improvised Romantic Comedy", a free comedy show in their Station North theater where two audience volunteers play the leads guided by trained improv performers.

Producing comedy shows every night of the week, The BIG Theater plays with holidays events such as Valentine's Day by pushing against audience expectations. In its second year, *When ___ Met ___* performers use true details of two audience volunteers to inspire a rom com story. Created in the moment, they instantly create classic rom com scenes, dialogue, and familiar characters.

Romantic comedies resurged in film over the last few months. 2018's headlines highlighted modern updates on the genre – including *Love, Simon*; *Crazy Rich Asians*; *To All The Boys I Loved Before*; and various Hallmark movies – showing how anyone's story might take center stage.

Dave LaSalle, a mainstage performer with the theater, created the show in 2018. LaSalle – who teaches with BIG and trains with BIG's corporate and private workshops programs – shared how this show allows the audience to share what's it's like to be a performer.

"Improv is magical; it can be life-transforming. Going to see an improv show is joyous and delightful, but in order to fully experience the power of improv, you have to get in the game," said LaSalle. "That's why I created this show: I wanted to give two people who had no improv experience the opportunity to experience the rush of being stars in an improv show."

Anne Neal, a legal recruiter and BIG performer, takes the stage in the updated show after being part of the original cast in 2018.

"I love being in this show because we never know what is going to happen with our volunteer 'couple' from the audience," said Neal. "They really keep the improvisers on our toes. I think it is an audience favorite because it's familiar territory (a rom-com) presented in a way they have never seen before."

Jennifer Withers, a former Broadway performer, serves as BIG's Artistic Director. Withers explains how the show uses familiar rom com movie ideas to guide audiences through a live theater experience.

"BIG has wonderful, dedicated fans, but part of what is so fun about *When ___ Met ___* is that it pulls in Baltimoreans that haven't ever seen an improv show before," said Withers. "The rom-com is such a relatable format; it draws people who are looking for something new and fun to do around Valentine's Day."

Seeing a local non-performer becomes part of what makes entertainment relatable for everyone who attends. LaSalle explains that audiences learn that living through a rom com isn't just for movie stars.

"The show is 100% designed to create a safe and absurdly supportive space for our audience guest-stars to find their feet onstage," said LaSalle. "My measure of the success of the show is whether those two people had a wonderful and memorable experience, and leave saying 'Wow, I really crushed it up there.' I also like it if the rest of the audience and the cast had fun."

"It is a delight to connect to the larger Baltimore community in that way - to see them experience improv for the first time and leave feeling inspired and, hopefully, feeling the love!" said Withers

"It is fast-paced, offering both laughs and poignant moments," said Neal. "There truly is something for everyone in it."

When ___ Met ___: An Improvised Romantic Comedy is Saturday, February 9; Friday, February 15; Saturday, February 16 at 8 p.m. at The BIG Theater, 1727 N. Charles St. For more information and tickets go to bigimprov.org/romcom

ABOUT BALTIMORE IMPROV GROUP

Baltimore Improv Group (BIG) serves as the city's leading non-profit improv comedy venue. BIG began in 2004 and now entertains with over 120 shows each year. With an annual audience of over 5,000 people, over 100 regular performers present audiences with shows every night of the week. As part of Young Audiences of Maryland (YAMD), BIG performs in assemblies and teaching residencies in Maryland schools.

The BIG Theater opened in October 2017 in Station North. The theater offers 3,000 square feet of space for shows; classes and workshops for adults, kids and teens; a podcast studio. BIG shows include improv comedy, stand-up, sketch, and more.

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