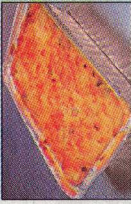


SWEET SOUNDS Local piano teacher holds concert to benefit Ravinia's REACH*TEACH*PLAY, Page 19



HOME COOKIN' 22CM digs into the best casseroles from around the North Shore, Page 20

LIFE & LA RTS

LOTS OF 'FUNNIER BY THE LAKE' BRINGS COMEDY TO THE NORTH SHORE, PAGE 18

Comedian Sameena Mustata (left) performs at "Funnier by the Lake" Friday, Jan. 15, at Madame Zuzu's in Highland Park. MIROSLAW POMIAN/22ND CENTURY MEDIA



ISA COVER STORY

'Funnier by the Lake' returns to Madame ZuZu's

DANIELLE GENSBURG
Staff Writer

"Welcome to the Highland Park Association of claustraphobics," shouted Highland Park native and stand-up comedian, Ricky March, before a packed room of local Highland Park residents and people from all across the Chicago area.

March was one of six comedians who performed a live, stand-up comedy routine as part of a running comedy showcase at Madame ZuZu's Tea House and Art Studio in Highland Park, known as "Funnier by the Lake" and hosted by Highland Park resident and stand-up comedian, Larry Bloom. The showcase is part of an effort by Bloom to bring live comedy to the North Shore, which he began over a year and a half ago, starting with a monthly, live comedy night at the former The Alley bar and bowling alley in Highland (now 210 Restaurant).

The third comedy showcase (and the first of 2016) to be held at the intimate teahouse and art studio in the heart of Ravinia, "Funnier by the Lake" opened at 8 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 15, and featured a diverse range of stand-up comedians, including Dae Jun Sung, Peter Lipsey, Sameena Mustafa, Audrey Jonas and Katye Palomino, in addition to Bloom and March. Each of the comedic routines were different and covered topics ranging from politics, religion and culture to technology, the media and family.

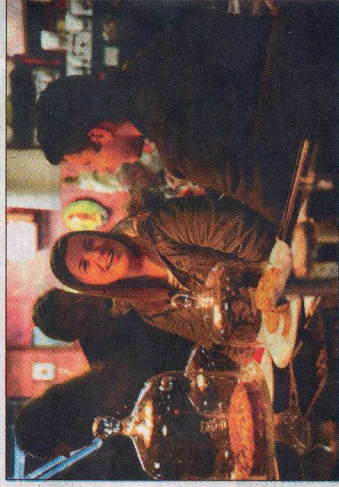
Sung, who recently moved to Chicago from Minnesota, joked about a number of things during his routine, including his difficulty looking for a roommate on Craigslist, the wealth on the North Shore and growing



Larry Bloom (left), Highland Park comedian and host of "Funnier by the Lake," addresses the audience Friday, Jan. 15, at Madame ZuZu's. PHOTOS BY MIROSLAW POMIAN/22ND CENTURY MEDIA



Dae Jun Sung performs at "Funnier by the Lake."



Caitlin (left) and Liam Miller wait for the show to start.

up in west Louisiana in an Asian family. "I like stand-up comedy because you can say all the weird stuff in your head that tickles your brain and then you can find other whimsy weirdos that have an affinity for your ideas," Sung said. Although Sung has performed stand-up for one of Bloom's comedy nights in Highland in the past, this was his first time performing at Madame ZuZu's. "I like coming up to the suburbs because it's all ages, you have older people and younger people, and it's a good opportunity to perform for people who actually support comedy and aren't jaded by it," Sung said.

Jonas, a Chicago resident, joked a lot about her family and relationships during her routine Friday night. Having a genuine love of comedy, Jonas said she also started performing stand-up as a way to bring more women into the field. "I went to a couple of open

mics and saw that women were pretty underrepresented, and I think comedy is the type of thing that should continue to be inclusive, so it was important for me to try to do it. And I like doing stand-up." Jonas said.

Jonas said she also loves connecting with people and making them laugh. "It's fun making people laugh who I've never met and who don't already know me," Jonas said. "The challenge is to try to find what people think is universally funny while also staying honest to what you find funny and want to talk about."

Lipsey, a Wilmette resident who performed at Madame ZuZu's during a comedy showcase back in October and has also performed in Bloom's comedy night in Highwood, joked about things all over the board, from reading a book to Stockholm syndrome to White Castle veggie sliders, the Russian lottery and Na-

tional Punctuation Day. "I'm a one-line comic," Lipsey said. "Attention spans in this country are brutal. I did about 50 jokes up there tonight, and if they don't like the first one, hopefully they'll like two or three other ones."

Lipsey said he finds inspiration for his jokes from newspapers, television and the radio, as well as when he hears something interesting. Bloom said he has his own standard jokes that he pulls from for a show, but he's also always writing, like all comedians.

"My favorite part about performing is just putting on a successful show, where the audience really has a great time, and when there's a full room," Bloom said.

The showcase Friday night was a hit with the audience, who appreciated the different kinds of jokes told by each of the comedians and was laughing the entire time.

"I'm very impressed with the show," Glen Elynn resi-

dent Tim Keeley said. "It's nice to laugh, and it's nice to hear others laugh."

Katherine Keenan, a Chicago resident who has attended a couple of comedy shows in the city and came out Friday night to support Jonas, said that she enjoyed the diversity of stand-up comedians at the show. "I like that they had half female and half male performers, and everyone had their different style. I love sharing in laughter and being around so many people who laugh," Keenan said.