



# ha!ifax comedy fest

## The History

The Ha!ifax Comedy Festival began in 1995 as an Atlantic Canadian comedy festival, promoting and showcasing talent from the Atlantic Provinces in the clubs in downtown Halifax.

It has since grown to be one of the most successful, longest-running comedy festivals in Canada, and is a must-attend event each April in Halifax with sold out shows each year.

The 2019 Festival will feature over 30 comedians from across Canada and the US and produce 16 shows over 4 days, 7 of which are taped for CBC TV. The Halifax ComedyFest is shot by Pilot Light Productions and aired on CBC TV each year in a six-part series. It is one of only three comedy festivals in Canada broadcast nationally on TV.

CBC broadcast numbers:

- Average viewers per episode: 335,000 on the national network
- Average seasonal viewership 2,000,000
- Ha! episodes air up to 50 (fifty) times, at different times in the schedule
- On-line viewership has over 22,000 views on Youtube and CBC mobile.

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## Festival Direction 2019 - 2021:

### **Create new shows and expand festival reach.**

- 2018 the festival created 3 new shows outside of the downtown core
  - Comedy Power Hour at Monte's Showbar and Grill in Waverly
  - Comedy Brew Ha! Ha! at Brewsters Pub in Bedford
  - LMAO Comedy at the Lower Deck Bar in Grill in Clayton Park

Each of these shows were extremely successful. These shows

- Increase the festival awareness
- Provide entertainment to local, independent restaurant and business owners
- Make Halifax ComedyFest more accessible to additional communities

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**LGBTQ**

**LMFAO**

*Show*



## **NEW to 2019**

As the festival grows, the Board and Producers were looking for ways to expand and diversify outside of the “shot for TV” shows.

This direction in the creation of the LGBTQLMFAO Show, the first show of its kind for the festival, focused on the culture and comedy in the LGBTQ community.

By producing this show, the festival will incur extra budgetary expenses outside of the general festival budget.

While there are certainly LGBTQ performers who are contracted for the TV portion of the festival, producers will need to bring in further comedians from across Canada, increasing the flight, accommodation, venue, hospitality and performer fee budgets.

Some of these expenses will be off set by ticket sales. The show will be held at the Casino Nova Scotia Schooner Room at \$35 each.

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## New to 2020 and beyond

Looking beyond the current festival programming, the board and festival producers are planning new shows such as:

### UNITED COLOURS OF COMEDY

This show will include comedians of mixed North American nationalities as an incubator to foster inclusiveness in the culture of comedy.

Many of the performers that are scouted for the festival are not always "TV ready" and are listed as "ones to watch".

By providing shows like this, the festival offers these up and coming comedians the opportunity to experience a large festival atmosphere, to learn from their more experienced peers and have stage performance time.



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## **Comedy Podcasts**

With a growing trend of social communication, the festival is exploring adding podcasts to the programming. This increases the bandwidth of exposure and promotion about Halifax and the comedy festival outside of normal promotional tools.

Podcasts are topical, funny, current, thought provoking and the one of the fastest growing mediums for comedy.

## **The Business of Being Funny**

The Halifax ComedyFest is proposing to develop The Business End of Funny, a series of entrepreneurial workshops for comedians looking to build their brands, and their business. The series of workshops will include:

- Marketing
- Growth & Development
- Financial Management
- Business Plan Development

## **Investing in local comedy scene**

There is a small but vibrant local comedy scene in Halifax. The board has a mandate to encourage and invest in these local comedians by involving them in the festival as much as possible.

- Inclusion in the roster line up for performances at the shows that are not taped for TV.
- Providing them with festival credentials, providing them an all access back stage pass to the shows and wrap party where they meet headliners, agents and industry personnel.

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The Halifax ComedyFest is committed to providing top class comedic entertainment for our audience members.

This commitment includes providing access to everyone. The Festival does this by providing shows in various locations throughout HRM and at various price points, including shows at no cost.

- Laugh @ Lunch at the Halifax Regional Library is free to attendees and averages 300 audience members each year – 2019 will be the fifth year for this show.
- Pub Shows – in Dartmouth, Bedford, Clayton Park and downtown Halifax are \$20
- Soft Seat theatres in down town Halifax range from \$35 to \$52



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## Operating Budget with Increase required for 2019 - 2021

The festival is in the early stages of developing the new programming and direction of the 2019 – 2021 festivals.

The budget and funding request will be submitted with our application.

The Festival, for the past 3 years, has received \$23,000 from HRM and we anticipate an increased request in the amount of \$7,000 for a total of \$30,000 in funding each year.

