

Contact Information:

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Lianne Wiker/Ellen Molina  
[lianne@heronagency.com](mailto:lianne@heronagency.com)  
[ellen@heronagency.com](mailto:ellen@heronagency.com)  
773.969.5200



**THE NATION'S LARGEST FEMALE COMEDY FESTIVAL  
THE CHICAGO WOMEN'S FUNNY FESTIVAL  
ANNOUNCES FIFTH ANNIVERSARY LINEUP**

*With 400 artists from over 95 groups performing 83 shows, the Chicago Women's Funny Festival packs the best in female comedy into 4 funny-filled days, June 16-19*

**CHICAGO – Stage 773** Director of Operations Jill Valentine and co-producer Liz McArthur are thrilled to announce the highly anticipated lineup for the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Women's Funny Festival**, taking place June 16 through June 19 at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont. The **Chicago Women's Funny Festival**, the largest of its kind in the nation, features all forms of comedy- from 'highbrow musical improv' to 'relatable stand-up' to 'character driven sketch', as comedienne's gather together from across the globe. With over 83 shows packed into four days, Stage 773 has made it easier than ever to discover new groups to love, allowing patrons to filter through art forms, a rating and keywords to find their own taste in comedy. The full schedule and searchable calendar for the **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Women's Funny Festival** can be viewed at [www.stage773.com/WomensFestCalendar](http://www.stage773.com/WomensFestCalendar).

"We are extremely excited to be celebrating the fifth year of the festival and to host some of the best in female comedy in the nation," said Valentine. "Having women from all different comedic art forms come together and celebrate under one roof in Chicago is something that is very special to us and the community."

Combining both fresh and familiar faces, highlights for 2016 include the return of SNL writer **Katie Rich** with former SC Mainstage/Consultant for Onion News Network, **Holly Laurent**, in their sketch duo *Joan and Ro*; Chicago Sketchfest veteran groups *Off Off Broadway* and *The Cupid Players* (developing all new works for the festival); Improv veterans **Susan Messing** and

**Rachel Mason** in *The Boys*; Comedic dance troupe *Matter Dance*; Transgender comic and writer **Dina Martinez**; Stand Up comedienne from Detroit **Simply Shanell**; Improv group from Kansas City, **5'10"**, and much more.

Chicago Women's Funny Festival was founded in 2012 when producers Jill Valentine and Liz McArthur wanted to build a comedy festival where women could come together and celebrate all art forms of comedy under one roof. The first festival boasted 66 shows and 400 performers in five days. Women's Fest also hosted events throughout the week where women from across the country could network with each other and more importantly, celebrate one another's work. The response from comediennes and audience members was overwhelmingly positive – which is why the festival is coming back for a fifth year.

Jill Valentine is a Chicago Southside native who has been the Executive Director of the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival (also the largest of its kind in the nation) since the festival's inception in 2000. She is also Stage 773's Director of Operations and a founding principal of the building. Jill performs in several popular and critically acclaimed groups in Chicago, including *The Cupid Players*, *Off Off Broadway* and *Feminine Gentleman* who have performed all over the country.

Liz McArthur hails from St. Louis and has worked with The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival since 2005. McArthur can be seen with groups such as *Off Off Broadway*, *OneTwoThree Comedy*, and *Feminine Gentlemen*. McArthur is also part of the hit zombie comedy *Musical of the Living Dead*.

All performances will take place at Chicago's home for the city's most innovative, creative and passionate off-Loop performing artists, Stage 773, located at 1225 W. Belmont. Stage 773 is a non-profit Chicago company that produces The Cupid Players, Bri-Ko, The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival, education and program opportunities, as well as offering subsidized theater rental space to the hundreds of Chicago's itinerant off-Loop companies and performers.

**The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Women's Funny Festival** runs June 16 – June 19, 2016.

Performances are Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 8 - 10 p.m., Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at 8 - 11 p.m., Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 - 11 p.m., and Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at 2 - 8 p.m. Individual ticket prices are \$15, and festival passes are available for \$37.50 (Thursday), \$47.50 (Friday), \$57.50 (Sunday) or \$100 for an all festival pass. New this year is a Sunday three show flex pass for \$33. All tickets and festival passes may be purchased at [www.Stage773.com](http://www.Stage773.com), by phone at [773.327.5252](tel:773.327.5252), and in person at the Stage 773 box office.

### **About Stage 773**

Stage 773 is a vibrant anchor of the Belmont Theatre District and home to Chicago's finest off-Loop talent. As a performance and tenant venue, our four stages provide entertainment for everyone: comedy, theatre, dance, musicals and more. We are a not-for-profit, connecting and catalyzing the theater community, while showcasing established artists and incubating up-and-coming talent.

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