

**Contact Information:**

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Lianne Wiker Hedditch/Ann Maher  
[lianne@heronagency.com](mailto:lianne@heronagency.com)  
[ann@heronagency.com](mailto:ann@heronagency.com)  
773.969.5200



***“A RAGING LAKEVIEW BEAST” – NINA METZ, CHICAGO TRIBUNE***

**SKETCH COMEDY ARTISTS AROUND THE WORLD ARE INVITED TO APPLY FOR  
THE 16<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CHICAGO SKETCH COMEDY FESTIVAL  
JANUARY 5 – 15, 2017**

***“Chicago SketchFest seizes the comedy moment...you need to hop to it.”  
– Chicago Tribune***

**CHICAGO (August 5, 2016)** – Stage 773 announces applications are now open for The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival’s 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The nation’s largest and most highly anticipated sketch comedy festival takes place January 5<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont. “SketchFest” continues to grow and evolve year after year, cementing the city’s reputation as the comedy hub of the nation. The festival “whose laughs are right on track,” says the *Chicago Sun Times*, features every form of sketch comedy imaginable, from perverted musical puppets to high-brow political satire.

The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival has proven itself as a comedic melting pot, inviting artists from all over the world to unite under one roof. SketchFest engages some of the newest, most experimental groups, curating performances that are fresh, exciting, and edgy. Successful comedians, including

*Silicon Valley's* TJ Miller and *NBC Community's* Danny Pudi continue to return for the grass-roots vibe and celebration.

“SketchFest 15 was a milestone year for us,” says Posen. “But this year is our Sweet 16! We're looking to build upon that energy with more new and exciting groups from around the globe, while also celebrating the veteran groups who have returned year after year to embrace the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival.”

Year after year, the Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival garners international attention, attracting over 1,000 artists and 11,000 patrons annually from around the world. The event celebrates the best in local, national and international sketch comedy. Applications for participation are open now and may be submitted through **October 15, 2016** by visiting <http://www.chicagosketchfest.com/>. All selected performers receive an all-festival pass, access to artist only events, and exclusive discounts at sponsoring hotel, dining and bar partners.

The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival debuted in January 2002, with 33 local Chicago Sketch Comedy groups gathering together to perform their craft. The event met overwhelming success and has grown to the largest sketch comedy festival in the world, hosting close to 170 groups performing 188 shows in 8 days.

All performances take place at Stage 773, Chicago's home for the most innovative, creative and passionate off-Loop performing artists. Over the course of the two weeks, Stage 773 transforms into a sketch comedy oasis, with the entire building featuring simultaneous performances in all four theater spaces. The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival invites comedians from around the world perform in an atmosphere of celebration, collaboration and community.

**Tickets for the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicago Sketch Festival** will go on sale **December 1, 2016 at 12 p.m.** Limited festival passes, regularly priced at **\$150**, will be available for only **\$100** if purchased before December 31 at [www.Stage773.com](http://www.Stage773.com), by phone at 773.327.5252, and in person at the Stage 773 box office, located at 1225 W Belmont.

### **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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