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New Comedy Troupe “The Straight Man” Celebrates Gay Pride

The PIT Leads Way for More Queer Representation with Seasonal Show

NEW YORK, NY - **The Peoples Improv Theater** (PIT) presents **The Straight Man** (TSM), a new genre-busting and gender-bending variety show spotlighting femme and queer talent. This change for the PIT marks a growing trend of marginalized performers claiming space within the NYC comedy scene. TSM subverts stale variety show tropes with satire and astute political commentary, while making “the straight man” celebrate whatever they deem useful. Next, the straight man celebrates gay pride.

The Straight Man Celebrates Gay Pride

June 29, 2019 / 9:30pm / Peoples Improv Theater, **123 E 24th St, NY 10010**

Tickets: \$12 (advance) / \$15 (door) / Ticket Link: <http://bit.ly/tsm-gaypride>

Pride Line Up: **Samuel Morrison**, one of Mogul Magazine's “Comics to Watch” and *Make Me Laugh* winner, brings an irreverent spin to modern “woke” issues. Non-binary Latinx gender goblin, **Oliver de Luz**, through stand up comedy, aims to challenge cis people, lure straight men into queerness, and help the rest of us feel less alone. **Aby James**, seen on HBO's *Crashing* and the Friars Club *Roast of Gloria Allred*, offers a fresh take on chap-stick lesbianism. Recently selected for NY Comedy Festival, **Matt Smith McCormick** performs as Pammy, a chain smoking bus driver who proves that small town doesn't equal small-mind. Musician **Dylan Adler** who hosts *Artistè* at Club Cumming, will parody popular songs from a queer perspective. Stand up comedian **Keira McGill**, a 2018 finalist for Broadway Comedy Club's *Yaaas Fest*, offers a new POV on anxiety. **Microdose**, who presents at UCB and the PIT, offers a radically inclusive quality to improv. **Walter Kelly** is a comedian whose writing has appeared on Bustle, Upworthy, TIME, and Vice. **Michael J Bevan**, a comedian who's been featured on Funny or Die, performs as an anxious gay teen who's presenting a project on pink eye to his health class. **Brendan Leonard**, a comedian, librarian at Lincoln Center, and script reader for the Public Theater, has rewritten *The Pina Colada Song* to explore gay couple dynamics. Co-producers and real life queers Jamie Benson and Hannah Goldman will host.



Considering that NYC comedy is still dominated by straight males, our search for queer comedic sanctuary is still so damn relevant."

-Jamie Benson, TSM Co-Producer

TSM Origins: Ex-dancer **Jamie Benson** and NYU Tisch graduate **Hannah Goldman** originally bonded as the seemingly only queer students in a Magnet Theater sketch writing class. Surprised with how old fashioned the NYC comedy scene still was, they created a community where LGBTQIA+ comedians are not only accepted, but celebrated. After successfully producing *Gay Stuff* at the PIT in 2018, they were offered a seasonal show.



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TSM Producer Jamie Benson, proclaimed “one of the strongest, hottest contemporary dancers of his generation” by critic Lewis Segal, and “crazy” by Dance Enthusiast’s Christine Jowers, is a choreographer and Cornish College of the Arts drop out. Called “Chaplin-like” by Backstage and “insightful and irreverent” by LA Weekly’s Ann Haskins, Benson’s **lowbrow meets highbrow choreographic work** has been presented at the Park Avenue Armory, Luckman Arts Complex, Bootleg Theater, NY Transit Museum, and Proctor’s Theater. Jamie Benson has been featured in the New York and LA Times, Dance Magazine, Good Magazine, Phaidon Press’ *Wild Art*, and awarded funding from Brooklyn Arts Council. His dance **films** are official selections of the Cinedans Film Festival, Athens Video Dance Project, Video Danza Havana, and Bucharest International Dance Film Festival.

Fed up with the pretense of hot moves and high art, Jamie Benson is divorcing the dance industry and running away with comedy- writing, producing, and performing in purely comedic work for stage and screen. As a comedian, Benson has already performed for Broadway Comedy Club’s *Yaaas Fest* and *Thoroughly Gay Thursdays*. His video sketch **Avenue WTF** is an official selection for 2019’s *Philly Sketchfest Comedy in Film Festival*. Learn more at jamiebenson.com.



TSM Producer Hannah Goldman is an actor, writer, producer, comedian, voiceover artist, and proud proponent of the Oxford comma. She has trained at Duke Ellington School of the Arts and New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. Goldman has performed everything from stand up to Shakespeare at various venues across the city, including HERE Arts Center, Magnet Theater, and WOW Cafe Theater. She is the Social Media Bitch for the femme production company **Experimental Bitch Presents**. You can catch her at open mics complaining about yeast infections. Learn more at hannah-goldman.com.

Deemed “*Best Improv Classes*” by New York Magazine, the **Peoples Improv Theater** is dedicated to fostering the art of comedic theater through coursework in performance, professional writing and production. The theater presents original comedic shows seven nights a week; and a corporate and educational workshop program that offers team building, leadership, and business training. The PIT was founded by Ali Reza Farahnakian in 2002, in a small black box theater located at 154 W29th Street. After outgrowing its original home, They moved to 123 E 24th Street on December 31, 2010, opening the PIT Striker and PIT Underground theaters. In 2015, the original PIT theater on W 29th Street was renamed The PIT Loft, officially becoming their third theater.

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