



## JUST FOR LAUGHS REVEALS THE 2021 COHORT OF THE COVETED *NEW FACES* SERIES

**Montreal, July 26, 2021** - After much anticipation, Just For Laughs is thrilled to reveal the list of rising talent included in the highly coveted group of the 2021 *New Faces*.

This world-renowned discovery showcase is internationally recognized for bearing the responsibility of launching the careers of countless all-star comedians. An unmissable part of each JFL Festival, the 2021 *New Faces* series will be no exception.

For the very first time since 1996, *New Faces* and *New Faces: Characters* series will be taking place in Los Angeles, while *New Faces: Canada*, presented by SiriusXM Canada in collaboration with Tangerine, will be taking place in Montreal. All four showcases will be streamed online for all ComedyPRO pass holders.

Since its conception 25 years ago, *New Faces* has established itself as the pinnacle showcase in comedy, where the freshest comedians in the game gear up to take the microphone and change the face of the industry.

“*New Faces* has been a launch pad for so many blockbuster comedians over the years,” shares **Bruce Hills, President of Just For Laughs**. “Our festival has offered undiscovered talent a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to showcase their best material in front of the most influential tastemakers in the industry. We can’t wait to see what this year’s group has in store.”

Just For Laughs *New Faces* is responsible for launching the careers of many all-star comedians and comedy actors, including Jimmy Fallon (1996), Gabriel Iglesias (1999), Kevin Hart (2001), Amy Schumer (2007), Ali Wong (2011), Pete Davidson (2013), Chris Redd (2015), Heidi Gardner (2017), Hannah Einbinder (2019), and so many more.

## NEW FACES OF COMEDY



For images of *New Faces in Comedy Group 1*, [click here](#).

For images of *New Faces in Comedy, Group 2*, [click here](#).

**Aaron Weber** is a standup comedian based in Nashville. Weber is a regular performer at the world-famous Grand Ole Opry, making his debut in 2019 as the youngest standup comedian ever to step into the Opry circle. Later that year, he made his television debut on the Opry's Circle Network, hosting two episodes of *Stand Up Nashville*. You can currently hear Aaron on *The Nateland Podcast* with Nate Bargatze and Brian Bates, where the three Nashville-based comedians tackle important world issues.

**Abby Roberge** is a stand-up comedian originally from Vancouver B.C. now based in Los Angeles, who is a born and raised Hare Krishna. He performs in clubs and theaters all over the US and Canada

including residencies at the Laugh Factory Las Vegas. He has appeared in NBC's pilot *So Close* and *Modern Family*. Videos of his standup and sketches have been viewed over 80 million times.

**Andre D. Thompson** is a New York based comedian, who had his late-night debut on NBC's *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*. He is currently a staff writer on Comedy Central's *Tha God's Honest Truth* for Comedy Central. In 2019, he came in 3rd place in the New York Comedy Club Competition and was an NBC Stand Up For Diversity finalist.

**Ariel Elias** is a comedian based in New York City. Growing up, this Kentucky Jew made everyone laugh at her bat mitzvah, and the rest is history. Ariel has been described as "a sly young comic from Kentucky" by the New York Times. She is also a contributing writer to *As Goes Wisconsin*, a news and politics-based show for, you guessed it, Wisconsin. Notably, she has written for Will Smith's Snapchat show *Will From Home*, and performed on the set of Amazon Prime's *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*.

**Brian Simpson** is a stand-up comedian based in Los Angeles, CA. His background as a foster child and Marine Corps veteran has led to a rare combination of life experiences that he manages to channel into an aggressively hilarious and refreshingly unique point of view. Brian is a paid regular at the World-Famous Comedy Store and recently made his TV debut on Comedy Central's *Lights Out with David Spade*. You can catch him next on Season 3 of *The Standups* which will premiere on Netflix later this year.

**Danielle Perez** is a Los Angeles based comedian, actor, writer and disability rights activist. Profiled by The Los Angeles Times after a standout performance in the 2020 CBS/Viacom Showcase, Danielle can be seen in season 2 of the Emmy nominated series *Special* streaming now on Netflix and will also star alongside Jodie Sweetin and Alec Mapa in the upcoming romantic comedy *Will You Be My Quarantine?* Not just a performer, Danielle is an advocate and advisor at Joey Soloway's 5050by2020, an intersectional arm of the Time's Up movement. This year she spoke with NALIP at the Sundance Film Festival on the importance of disabled Latinx inclusion in entertainment.

**Dave Mizzoni** is comedian, writer and actor based in New York City. Dave is the creator, writer and star of the Jax Media/Roku original series *Gayme Show*. Recently, Dave produced on Season 13 of *Rupaul's Drag Race* and can be seen on Comedy Central's *The Other Two*. He created, wrote and starred in the Snapchat original series "Making It" and was named a "Comic to Watch" by New York Comedy Festival 2019 and was a member of the 2020 CBS Diversity Showcase.

**Erica Nicole Clark** is a teacher-turned-comedian from Chicago, who began her comedy journey at Improv Olympic before stepping into the Comedy pond. Erica's unique childhood and day job are a perfect set up for her punchlines. Erica has won the GrandSlam at the Moth.

**Ian Lara** is just your average Dominican kid from Queens, New York. He's the host of the wildly popular *Out of Tune* music game show app, featured in *Variety* and *Cosmopolitan*. Ian made his standup comedy debut on Comedy Central's *StandUP* digital series, amassing over 10 million views and was featured in NBC's *Bring The Funny*. In 2019, Ian made his late night debut appearing on NBC's *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*. In the same year, Ian went on to co-star in his first HBO special *Entre Nos Presents East Meets West*.

**Jaye McBride** is a New York based stand-up comedian who is funny, smart and proudly transgender. Jaye has been featured on SiriusXM and on Comedy Central and her long awaited podcast "Trans Sister Radio" is set to debut in September of 2021. In addition to stand-up, Jaye speaks at high schools, colleges and groups all across the country about being transgender and how we can help trans kids from facing some of the obstacles and challenges she faced.

**Jes Tom** is a New York based stand-up comic, actor, and writer, gleefully providing the trans, queer, Asian American, radical cyborg perspective that everyone never knew they wanted. Most recently, they were a staff writer in the mini room for season two of the much-anticipated Taika Waititi HBO Max series, *Our Flag Means Death*. They can be seen in HBO Max's *Love Life* opposite Anna Kendrick and on their own digital series *Dear Jes* for Netflix's *The Most*. They wrote for the upcoming Audible/Broadway Video series *Hot White Heist*, produced by Alan Cumming.

**Kiry Shabazz** is a stand-up from Cleveland who started comedy in Nor-Cal, and is now based in LA. Kiry was one of 1,250 stand ups who auditioned at open calls for the annual *Stand Up NBC Competition*, and went on to win the entire competition. Kiry made his late night debut on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*. Since then, his stand up has been featured by Comedy Central's *Stand Up Featuring* series, the *Bill Burr Presents The Ringers* stand up series, and on the second season of Epix's *Unprotected Sets*.

**Maddie Wiener** is a stand-up comedian from North Carolina with a style described as "irreverent humor ... with a streak of brazenness," and "abrasive and likable at the same time." She has appeared on *You Up with Nikki Glaser* on Sirius XM and was a 2018 semi-finalist for *Stand-Up NBC*.

**Peter Kim** is a stand-up comedian, actor, and writer based in Los Angeles. He currently has a project in development with CBS Studios/ABC Networks, and a project in Disney. He is a series regular on the new Amazon animated series *Fairfax*. Other recent credits include HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, and CBS's *NCIS*. Peter got his start at Second City Chicago where he received a Jeff Award nomination for his performance in the critically acclaimed revue, *A Red Line Runs Through It*.

**Randall Otis** is an Emmy-nominated comedian from Orlando, FL, who currently resides in NYC. He's a writer on Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah* and has been featured on CBS' *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, VICE and written for the 2021 Grammys.



**Robin Tran**, based in Orange County, started her life presenting as a male named Robert Tran. In 2015, she came out as a transgender woman and has been performing as Robin ever since. In 2018, she appeared on Comedy Central's *Roast Battle* and her first one-hour comedy special, *Don't Look at Me* is streaming on Hulu, Spotify and iTunes. She was also a writer on *Historical Roasts* on Netflix.

**Sarah Squirm** is an LA-based comedian and visual artist who has become known for her unconventional and popular traveling freaky variety show, *Helltrap Nightmare*. Sarah opened for Eric Andre's national tour and wrote on *The Eric Andre Show*. She staffed on the Adult Swim series *Three Busy Debras* and Netflix's *Magic for Humans*. She was previously named one of Vulture's Comics to Watch for 2018 and one of TIME OUT Magazine's Five Comics to Watch for 2017.

**Sydnee Washington** is a New York based comedian, writer, and actress. She was featured on Comedy Central's "Up Next" showcase in 2018. She is also the co-host of the popular podcast, *The Unofficial Expert* and can be seen on Showtime's *ZIWE* & Comedy Central's *Broad City*.

**Wally Baram** is a Mexican-Syrian stand-up comedian, writer, and actress living in Los Angeles. Wally has written on Hulu/FX's *What We Do In The Shadows*, HBO's *Betty*, and the upcoming Amazon series, *Sprung*. Wally made her late night stand-up debut this summer on CBS' *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*.

**Will Foskey** is a stand-up comic from Woodstock, GA. He was first discovered by "Ratchet People Meet", a sketch group led by DC Young Fly and Navv Greene. Since the group disbanded, he has traveled the country doing stand-up comedy and writing/filming projects with his friends and fellow comics. He has made multiple appearances on the hit podcast, *The 85 South Show*.

**The *New Faces of Comedy* showcases will take place at Dynasty Typewriter in Los Angeles, on July 28 & 29, 2021 at 7pm PST.**

*Tickets and online streaming of the shows are available only with the ComedyPRO pass.*

*You can purchase the pass online at [www.comedypro.hahaha.com](http://www.comedypro.hahaha.com)*

## NEW FACES: CHARACTERS



**ANDREW KNOX**  
**ARISTOTLE ATHIRAS**  
**CORIN WELLS**  
**ELENA SKOPETOS**  
**JOSEPH LYMOUS**

**characters**  
**NEW FACES OF COMEDY**

**KATE OWENS**  
**PATTY GUGGENHEIM**  
**VINNY THOMAS**  
**WOODY FU**

For images of *New Faces: Characters*, [click here](#).

**Andrew Knox** is an actor-writer-improvise-comedian and multi-hyphenate currently residing in Los Angeles. Before moving to LA in 2020, he wrote and performed in 4 original revues on The Second City's Mainstage and ETC Stage in Chicago. Andrew can be seen on Syfy's *The Movie Show*, NBC's *Chicago PD*, and Topic's *The Last Show Left on Earth* (for which he also wrote).

**Aristotle Athiras** is a Middle Eastern-American comedian, actor, writer, director and podcaster based in Los Angeles. Shortly after getting his start in stand-up comedy, he began writing, performing and directing sketches with future collaborators Hasan Minhaj, Asif Ali and Fahim Anwar to form Goatface — the first and only sketch comedy show on Comedy Central to feature an all Muslim-American cast to date. In 2019, he was cast in HBO's *Silicon Valley*.

**Corin Wells** is an actor, writer and comedian based in New York. She is a writer for Peacock's *The Amber Ruffin Show* on Peacock and she currently voices on *Stephen Colbert Presents Tooning Out The News*. She is the co-founder of the Squirrel Comedy Theatre, a non-profit comedy theatre based in New York City.

**Elena Skopetos** is a Brooklyn based comedian, actress, and writer. She's an alum of UCB's Characters Welcome, and Magnet Theater's Character Bash. Elena has performed her one-woman show, *Elena Skopetos: Impressing My Dad*, at The New York Comedy Festival and Toronto Sketchfest. She toured Europe with her two-woman show, *Sisters Three*, which was a New York Times Critics Pick.

**Joseph Lymous** is a Black, queer, comedian, improviser, content creator, director and performing artist based in Brooklyn. He is the owner of his own digital media company, jomiray productions. His puppet/stop motion/live action series, *friend* is in development with producer Evan Shapiro. Joseph can be seen in the upcoming season of Comedy Central's *Awkwafina is Nora from Queens*.

**Kate Owens** is a NYC-based actor, comedian, and award-winning clown known for her fearless commitment to characters and audacious physical comedy. Her critically-acclaimed solo show, *Cooking with Kathryn*, won "Best Physical Comedy" at Frigid Fest and "Critics Choice" at PortFringe Fest and has played throughout New York & LA. Kate earned a spot on the highly coveted Cirque du Soleil roster and has studied with the French master clown, Philippe Gaulier, AKA "The Tormentor."

**Patty Guggenheim** is an actress, comedian and writer who has starred in POP's *Florida Girls*. She has recurred on ABC's *Splitting Up Together* and MTV's *Mary + Jane*. She was also featured on HBOS' *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, NBC's *Superstore*, CBS' *Modern Family*, and was a series regular on E's *Hashtaggers!* She has voiced multiple characters for Adult Swim's *Mike Tyson Mysteries* and

Crackle's *Supermansion* and took home the Sundance Jury Award for *Brick Novax's Diary* in which she voiced all the female characters.

**Vinny Thomas** is a delightful comedian and armchair naturalist based in Chicago. He was formerly a member of Second City's house improv ensemble "Twisty" and a frequent performer on a variety of other local stages. This summer, he joined the iconic staff of NPR's *Wait Wait Don't Tell Me* as a guest writer. Since the pandemic (perhaps you've heard of it), Vinny has created videos on social media that feature aliens, animals, and even the occasional vegetable.

**Woody Fu** is an actor/creator based in New York. He's appeared on Comedy Central, CBS, FX, and the ABC Discovers 2020 Actor Showcase. He was a cast member of Boom Chicago (Amsterdam), and also starred as Jon Snow in *Thrones! The Musical Parody* at Edinburgh Fringe. As a creator, Woody co-wrote and starred in the digital sketch series *UR Asian Friend*, produced by UCB Comedy and Nerdist. He also created the series *Asian American Studies* (Official Selection: Slamdance 2019).

**The *New Faces: Characters* showcase will take place at Dynasty Typewriter  
in Los Angeles, on July 29, 2021 at 4pm PST.**

*Tickets and online streaming of the shows are available only with the ComedyPRO pass.*

*You can purchase the pass online at [www.comedypro.hahaha.com](http://www.comedypro.hahaha.com)*



## NEW FACES: CANADA

Presented by SiriusXM Canada in collaboration with Tangerine



For images of *New Faces: Canada*, [click here](#).

**Aaron Read** is an award-winning stand-up comic, improviser, actor, and visual artist from Vancouver. His comedy fluctuates somewhere between silliness and sad-psychedelia and has garnered him numerous awards including Just For Laughs North West's "Breakout Artist Of The Year" and "Toughest Act To Follow". Experimenting with comedy in all its forms, Aaron performs in a weekly, 200 seat, sold-out comedy show called *The Sunday Service*, has made video work that ended up on the pages of *The A.V. Club*, and has performed unconventional solo sketch and stand-up comedy for the past 10 years.

**Al Val** has enjoyed a meteoric rise in the Canadian comedy scene. In the three short years since Al came out as trans, she has made appearances at Just For Laughs, JFL North West, Off-JFL/Zoofest, and has taped stand-up sets for CBC Gem's *New Wave of Standup* and CTV Comedy's *The Stand-Up Show with Jon Dore*. Host of her own weekly solo stream-of-consciousness podcast *PodGis*, graduate of Second City's Conservatory Program, and one part of improv-rock musical duo "OverDude",

there's no wonder this multitalented whirlwind was voted by her peers as 2020's "Breakout Comic of the Year".

**Andrea Jin** is a stand-up comedian and screenwriter based in Vancouver BC. Born in Shanghai, she immigrated to where she taught herself English through watching sitcoms and standup on TV. Andrea has performed at JFL42, JFL Northwest, SiriusXM's Top Comic (National Finalist), Seattle International Comedy Competition (Semi-Finalist), CBC's *The Debaters*, Winnipeg Comedy Festival and more. Her debut comedy album, *Grandma's Girl*, is available now.

**Drew Behm** is a high energy comedian from Edmonton, Alberta. Living in Toronto, Behm is a stand-up comedian who has appeared at the Halifax Comedy Festival, JFL42 in Toronto, the Hubcap Comedy Festival, and was a finalist in Sirius XM Canada's Top Comic. As a writer, Drew's satire has been featured on the CBC's Comedy website and The Hard Times Magazine. Drew's debut comedy album *GNARLY* was released in September 2018 on all platforms.

**Harrison Weinreb** is a young stand-up comic from Montreal. His unique style blends absurd one-liners with unconventional observational humor and has allowed him to open for some of Canada's greatest comedians. He's been featured in OFF-JFL, the Canadian North Arctic Comedy Festival and came in first place at the Crackup Comedy Best of Under 30 Competition.

**Juliana Rodrigues** is a stand-up comedian from Toronto. The Canadian Press did a segment about her journey titled, "Canada 150: On Stage with a Teenage Stand-up Comedian" for The Toronto Star. Her work has also been featured on The National. In 2016 she participated in the Cleveland Comedy Festival where she was named as a finalist at "Best of Fest". Juliana made her CBC Radio debut at the 2019 Kitchener-Waterloo Comedy Festival and performed at the Icebreakers Comedy Festival in 2020. More recently, her podcast, *All Good Podcast* made the "Top 10 Comedy Podcasts" list as part of TRNTO in 2020 and she did her first TV taping for Just For Laughs as part of *The Stand-up Show with Jon Dore* in late 2020.

**Meg MacKay** is a comedian and writer from Prince Edward Island. As a TV writer she's written for CBC's *The Baroness Von Sketch Show* and *This Hour has 22 Minutes*. A storyteller and wanderer, she's appeared on stages everywhere from Moncton, New Brunswick to Muscat, Oman. As a stand up, her debut album *Probably a Witch* was released on Howl and Roar Records in May of 2020.

**Nitish Sakhuja**, is a Toronto-based second generation Indian Canadian comedian. He is a crowd favourite at *Kenny Robinson's Nubian show* as well as NXNE, The Okanagan Comedy Festival, The Border City Comedy Festival and several others. Beyond stand up, Nitish has blown up as an actor after being seen in several commercials and gathering millions of views starring in a web series for *HERB*.

**Salma Hindy** is a first generation Egyptian-Canadian comedian who has been featured on the CBC, Globe and Mail, CityNews, Refinery29 and more. She has an episode with CBC Gem's *New Wave of Stand-Up* and recently recorded two televised performances, due to be released soon.. She recently gave a Tedx talk about her emotional journey in comedy titled "Why People Pleasing is Hurting You." Salma is the star of her own name-sake documentary, *Salma* which was featured at Toronto Shorts Film Festival, Big Apple Film Festival, Austin Revolution Film Festival, Burbank International Film Festival, and Women's International Film Festival in 2019.

**Travis Lindsay** is the most prolific writer in East Coast Comedy. His great mix of jokes and storytelling has been captivating audiences since the age of 16. Travis has been named "Best Nova Scotia Comedian" (2016), has been heard on Sirius XM, Appeared on CBC at the Halifax Comedy Fest (2018, 2020) and recently joined CBC's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* as an on air Correspondent and writer. In 2021, he recorded for Just For Laughs Originals and his debut album *The Kid is Alright* went #1 on iTunes Comedy Charts.

**The *New Faces: Canada* showcase will take place at Club Soda  
in Montreal, on July 30, 2021 at 7:30pm EST.**

*Tickets and online streaming of the shows are available only with the ComedyPRO pass.  
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Downtown Montréal is coming back to life this summer thanks to the return of outdoor shows and many other street activities and installations by Just pour rire MONTRÉAL / Just For Laughs MONTRÉAL, presented by Beneva, born from the merger of La Capitale and SSQ Assurances, in collaboration with Loto-Québec from July 15 to 24. The Beneva Stage will host 20 shows featuring various entertainers, 40 performances combining dance, musical performances and comedy at Place Loto-Québec; fun street activities and large-format video projections on buildings in the Quartier des spectacles.

**Determined to keep our dedicated comedy fans entertained until we can all reunite safely in Montréal for our 40th anniversary in 2022, this year's hybrid Just For Laughs MONTRÉAL Festival will be the comedy event of the summer!**

#### **THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS**

The Just For Laughs Group would like to thank all its partners, who have been tremendous allies in bringing about the success of this initiative. First, we'd like to acknowledge the support of **Beneva**,

born from the coming together of **La Capitale** and **SSQ Insurance**, **Loto-Québec**, **Laugh Out Loud (LOL!)**, **Tangerine Bank**, **Bell**, **Tim Hortons**, **SiriusXM Canada**, **Stella Artois**, **BuzzCast**, **CTV Comedy Channel** and **Variety**. We also extend our thanks to our public partners: **the City of Montréal**, **SODEC** and the **Government of Canada**.

Find us on social #JFLFestival

Facebook: @justforlaughs

Twitter: @justforlaughs

Instagram: @justforlaughs

### **About the Just for Laughs Group**

Founded in 1983, the Just for Laughs Group is the most important player in the global comedy industry. Under the management of Groupe CH, Bell Media and ICM Partners, the company is an international powerhouse in the creation of multi-platform comedy content. Every year, it entertains millions of spectators with its festivals on Canadian and international stages, in Montréal – the biggest comedy event in the world – as well as in Toronto, Vancouver, Sydney and Bermuda. The Group organizes shows featuring thousands of comics from Canada and other countries, including established artists as well as up-and-comers; stages its own comedy shows and musicals; produces touring shows; broadcasts digital and televised content (notably Gags, which is shown in 150 countries and followed by an online audience of ten million on YouTube); manages talented artists; and is the originator of the ComedyPRO and JPR Pro industry conferences. [www.hahaha.com](http://www.hahaha.com)

### **About ComedyPRO**

Created in 2008, ComedyPRO is the most important annual global gathering of the biggest players in the comedy world. This industry conference is a four-day event that explores all facets of comedy and takes place in July during the peak industry/media/performer dates of the Montreal Just For Laughs Festival. This year's ComedyPRO will take place online in a secure, virtual setting accessible only to registered pass holders.

### **About BuzzCast**

Powering the world's most buzzworthy events! BuzzCast is the premium virtual event platform, delivering a production-quality experience with zero downtime. Trusted by global brands and event production agencies, BuzzCast is highly secure and can engage hundreds of thousands of attendees with complex tracks and formats. [www.BuzzCast.com](http://www.BuzzCast.com)

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