

So you wanna be a comedian?



Glaring limelight, a standing ovation with the audience on their feet and the exhilarating rush at the chorus of unified applause at the end of a successful show - a comedian's stellar rapport is not an overnight success.

Laughter is the best medicine but making the climb from channelling your inner Chandler Bing to aspiring to the mighty comedian-extraordinaire George Carlin is no easy undertaking.

The niche market for comedy in Dhaka strives with its two primary wings: Bangladesh Comedy Club and Naveed's Comedy Club, both of which list accredited and aspiring comedians who live to deliver gag after gag to the eager audiences of Dhaka. However, if brilliant comedian Mosharraf Yaafi is to be quoted, "Mere joke-telling and stand-up comedy are two completely different things."

With his reputation of being a semi-finalist on the Indian reality comedy show 'Mirakel' preceding him, Mosharraf Yaafi believes preparing a script with sharp punch-lines, relentlessly testing material to gather opinion and coming up with humorous and relatable content time and again is the true definition of stand-up comedy.

"Comedy is a difficult job. It is all about the element of surprise," Yaafi observes.

Delivering a joke with the element of surprise is not the only difficulty, however. Rightfully deemed stressful and challeng-

ing, actually becoming a comedian in Bangladesh means beating unrealistic odds. That might explain why many comedians opt to take shelter in the pursuit of stable, corporate jobs. The only exception to this being the veteran comedian with a repertoire of live shows and the prestigious awardee of Best Male Comedian at the 2007 Original Las Vegas Comedy Festivals - Naveed Mahbub.

He elaborates, "If you want to be a comedian and have the true passion and zeal, the hard part is already over."

Naveed Mahbub is an avid believer of frequenting comedy clubs, observing top professionals on stage and constantly writing original material if you want to make it in the comedy scene. Additionally, enrol for workshops and seminars conducted by trained comedians and take inspiration from the best of the best in the business.

Russell Peters, proudly hailing from Canada and of Indian descent, George Carlin, the true brilliance or our very own Naveed Mahbub branding Bangladesh in foreign lands, among others are shining examples.

However, your work to be a comedian is still cut out for you. The skill-set that will ultimately catapult you to the big leagues is a long and tall list. Practice makes perfect and in comedy, it is essential to keep saying yes to going on stage and performing with the same zeal time after time. While being aware

of recent events for relevant jokes and quick wits to connect fact with humour are important, timing is the real underdog here. The perfect pause before the final punch-line can create all the impact and make the audience laugh their hearts out, rolling in their aisles. More importantly, a keen eye to look past the ordinary, daily incidents to discover hidden, comic masterpieces is not the quality everyone is blessed with.

This is what Mosharraf Yaafi strives on.

Deep analysis and picking humour from the most inopportune of moments are unique abilities. Also helpful are knowing your audience to its bone and studying your material before your performance.

Indeed making it as a big-time comedian has its perks. Engaging with your audience in the spotlight and being the reason of a precious laughter is truly incomparable. Converting passion into profession is a real sense of accomplishment and the rush of a live performance surpasses all.

Naveed Mahbub further adds, "Using the platform to preach social messages with a dose of humour means you have an audience willing to listen." The opinion is seconded by fellow comedian Mosharraf Yaafi who states, "Positive and powerful thoughts can be provoked with comedy." Indeed everything is more approachable with comedy and prominent or underlying social problems can

be addressed with equal humour. This effective strategy works wonders in raising awareness and prompts willing minds to come together for imminent solutions.

However, along with the good comes the bad. Impatient audience in the face of a long joke that needs a tiring back-story, satirical puns that end up being offensive and an absolute dedication to comedy taking a toll on family life are all the downsides of the fun and comedic lifestyle.

At the end of the day though, it is important to take the sunshine with the rain. Going up on stage to do what you love everyday ultimately makes you love what you do. And you do not come by something that rare very often.

Why do we even need humour in our lives?

Mosharraf Yaafi explains it best. "Very few people can make others laugh. Without humour the looming gloom of life would consume and take us." Naveed Mahbub agrees it is a true relief from the 101 stress-pressers in the bustling and fast-paced city of Dhaka.

Giving someone an unparalleled gift of laughter is undoubtedly better than presenting a box neatly wrapped in a bow. And that is precisely why comedy should never make a dramatic exit, or any kind of exit, for that matter, from any of our lives.

By Ramisa Haque

CHECK IT OUT

Spice & Rice Re-loaded

Sugar and Spice impresses you first with its ambience. As a matter of fact, the General Manager Christoph Voegeli along with Executive Chef Jed Archdeacon and Chef James Rozario (Chef de Cuisine of S&R) had traveled to various parts of the old city to source these beautiful remnants of the past. "We want to introduce Dhaka bona fide to our guests in terms of smells, sight and flavor which lead us on an adventure to various parts of the city, from Old Dhaka to DCC," said Christoph Voegeli.

The food comes next. Chef Jed Archdeacon explains. "While there may be many restaurants in Bangladesh, most of them turn out to serve Indian food or mixed cuisine. We strive to bring the genuine tastes of Dhaka to our guests," he added. Chef James brings forward the luxurious kebabs, curries and appetizers prepared in Dhakaiya styles, with produce imported from abroad. "Various exotic dishes will be found such as biriyani, pigeon masala, shan muton bhuna, etc. A mélange of Bengali sweets will be present such as pistachio kulfi, roshogolla, chomchom, firni, jorda, etc."

