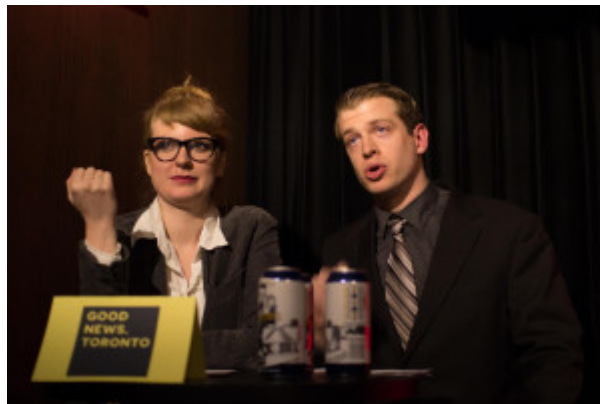


REVIEW: GOOD NEWS, TORONTO: THE SHOW (COMEDY BAR)

JUNE 27, 2015 | RANDALL WILLIS | [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



***Good News, Toronto* is a monthly comedic newscast at the Comedy Bar**

Imagine you're on a tour of the old CFTO studios in the east end of Toronto, visiting the set of the CTV *News at 6* when out of nowhere, a production assistant runs up and hands you a script. Slamming you in a chair and pointing you at a camera, the PA yells "Three...two..." and points. A red light flares and everyone stares.

Such is the seemingly unrehearsed charm of [Good News, Toronto](#), a monthly show at [Comedy Bar](#) that tries to bring comedic context to recent events. From Republican nominees to the Pan Am Games, the Gardiner Expressway to phallic Legos, John Tory to things that look like vaginas (hello, City Hall).

Nothing is off-limits for hosts Korri Birch and Michelle Parkes. And when I say nothing, that also includes those subjects for which they don't actually have a joke. Say it loudly enough or strangely enough and you might just get a laugh.

While sucking back a bottle of wine, these two occupy a corner table near the stage and sell the news for all they're worth.

Birch is the higher energy of the two, almost pouncing on the audience to sell the joke. Parkes, meanwhile, is more sedate, often providing the voice of reason to Birch's failure anxiety. But she's the one you need to watch, as she makes up in timing what Birch offers in volume.

The news bits are pretty standard fare that most know from the news desk of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. The set-up is an item found online, followed by a witty, crude or smart-assed observation (when the actual news item isn't surreal enough).

But again, what sells these bits and sets them apart from *22 Minutes* is their lack of polish and the earnestness of the hosts. Sometimes you laugh simply because they really need you to.

But [Good News, Toronto](#) isn't only all the news that's fit to mock. The news segments are interspersed with short skits and stand-up sets.



An example of the former was Birch's attempt to interview Godzilla, who had recently been made an official citizen of Japan. Even a surprise visit from King Kong couldn't save this bit. The only laughter was nervous laughter, and most of that was from Birch.

Luckily, a higher note was reached with the stand-up performers in tonight's show: Zacharie Weingarten, [Shirley Whalen](#), [Rodrigo Fernandez-Stoll](#) and [Matt Shury](#).

Without a doubt, Whalen stole the evening. Although she hit the standards of dating troubles and issues with mom, she killed it and took everything to a new level.

Fernandez-Stoll, meanwhile, enthralled us with his submission for the Pan Am Games theme song. Playing off Birch's interruptions, the song largely devolved into an AirBnB ad for Fernandez-Stoll's apartment and a call for orgies.

Possibly still reeling from his performance as Godzilla, I thought Weingarten's act was a little flat out the gate. He managed to gain the room, however, when he shared his excitement about winning free tickets to see the ParaPan Am Games...to watch bocce...at 8 a.m....in Whitby.

Shury was the final stand-up of the night, a returnee to [Good News, Toronto](#) now living in Montreal, a city he compared to the Gardiner Expressway. It's fun, he enthused, but it's crumbling. His best bit, unfortunately, was his ability to name every TTC route just from its number.

Like any comedy show in any city, [Good News, Toronto](#) had its up moments and its down, but its immediacy, its energy and its desperation kept the audience entertained all night long.

Details

- [Good News, Toronto](#) is a monthly show at [Comedy Bar](#) check their website for future dates.

Photos of Michelle Parkes and Korri Birch provided by the company