

# The Gazette

Montreal, QC  
July 15, 2006

## Rude and raunchy can roll off both tongues

BILL BROWNSTEIN  
THE GAZETTE

Contrary to popular opinion, the francophone Nasty Show didn't take place during last Sunday's World Cup final, when French soccer hero Zinedine Zidane's head-butt resonated around the planet and, mostly, the solar plexus of Italian defender Marco Materazzi. In fact, the franco comedic nastiness only kicked off Thursday around midnight with the launch of Show XXX at the Studio Juste Pour Rire.

There has been skepticism from francos as well as anglos about this French equivalent to Just for Laughs' perennially popular Nasty Show series at Club Soda. Some feared they would be in store for a night of comics bopping each other over the noggin with baguettes and smearing their bodies with Brie.

Well, fret not, skeptics. No such Jerry Lewis shenanigans to be found at Show XXX. That could be because organizers failed to conscript any comedians from France for this spectacle. Wisely, they selected a quartet of Québécois comics - Martin Felip, P-A Méthot, Jean-François Mercier and Michel Sigouin - who are as rude and raunchy and, most essential, as funny as their anglo Yank and Canuck counterparts working the Nasty Show down the street.

The prevailing view is that anglo and franco audiences have differing cultural sensibilities on what makes each giggle. And that anglo and franco comics focus on different subjects to elicit the laughs. Perhaps on some levels, but it gives me great pleasure to report that when it comes to slime, we seem to have struck a sort of cultural consensus.

Sexual positions, relationship woes, religious obsessions, digestive difficulties, alcohol intake, political boredom and, yes, Brokeback Mountain interpretations are the focal points for both the franco and anglo shows. If the frenetic Felip, for example, were to translate his material, he would find himself much at home on the

Club Soda stage, a franco Bobby Slayton, if you will. Similarly, the jolly Méthot is almost a dead-ringer for Nasty Show rookie Jay Oakerson. Raconteur Sigouin brings a decidedly cerebral, Dom Irrera-like level of affability to his filth. And the raving Mercier could be comedy's answer to Charles Manson.

Equally intriguing is that the franco and anglo wits play to the same crowds, largely adoring throngs of young women who can't seem to get enough nastiness. The sociologists and shrinks will be working long and hard into the night to get a grip on this phenomenon.

In fairness, though, the Nasty Show, now into its 92nd season according to host-for-life Slayton, is a well-oiled ... mmm ... smooth-running ... mmm ... slick ... mmm ... successful piece of machinery. Show XXX is barely post-fetal, in only its second year. There are a couple of wrinkles and quirks to work out, but give it another couple of years and thousands will be snaked around the block to get in - as is the case at the Nasty Show.

The Nasty Show, actually in its 20th year, needs no help from anyone. Its 15-show run wraps tomorrow, and tickets, as always, have been as scarce as Bibles in the Slayton family abode.

This summer's edition is the tightest in years, with Irrera, Oakerson, Canuck Mike Wilmot, lone-lady Patty Rosborough and the street's hysterical answer to Dr. Ruth, Patrice Oneal. Plus our irascible host Slayton, who has been on fire. Of course, that might have something to do with the fact that he visited a Taco Bell Express just before arriving here: "What, Taco Bell wasn't fast enough? Now they need an Express, so the food can just shoot right out your (butt)!"

**Show XXX runs until Tuesday at Studio Juste Pour Rire, 2109 St. Laurent Blvd. The Nasty Show wraps tomorrow at Club Soda, 1225 St. Laurent Blvd. Call 514-845-2322.**