



From X5 Contest At *Stardome Comedy Club*



From Amazon TV Series *Hunters* With Al Pacino



From *The Dr. Steve Show*



From the film *Tango Shalom*



Headlining *The Joke Joint Comedy Club*



From The Nice International Film Festival



From the *Investigation Discovery* TV Series *Horror at the Cecil Hotel*



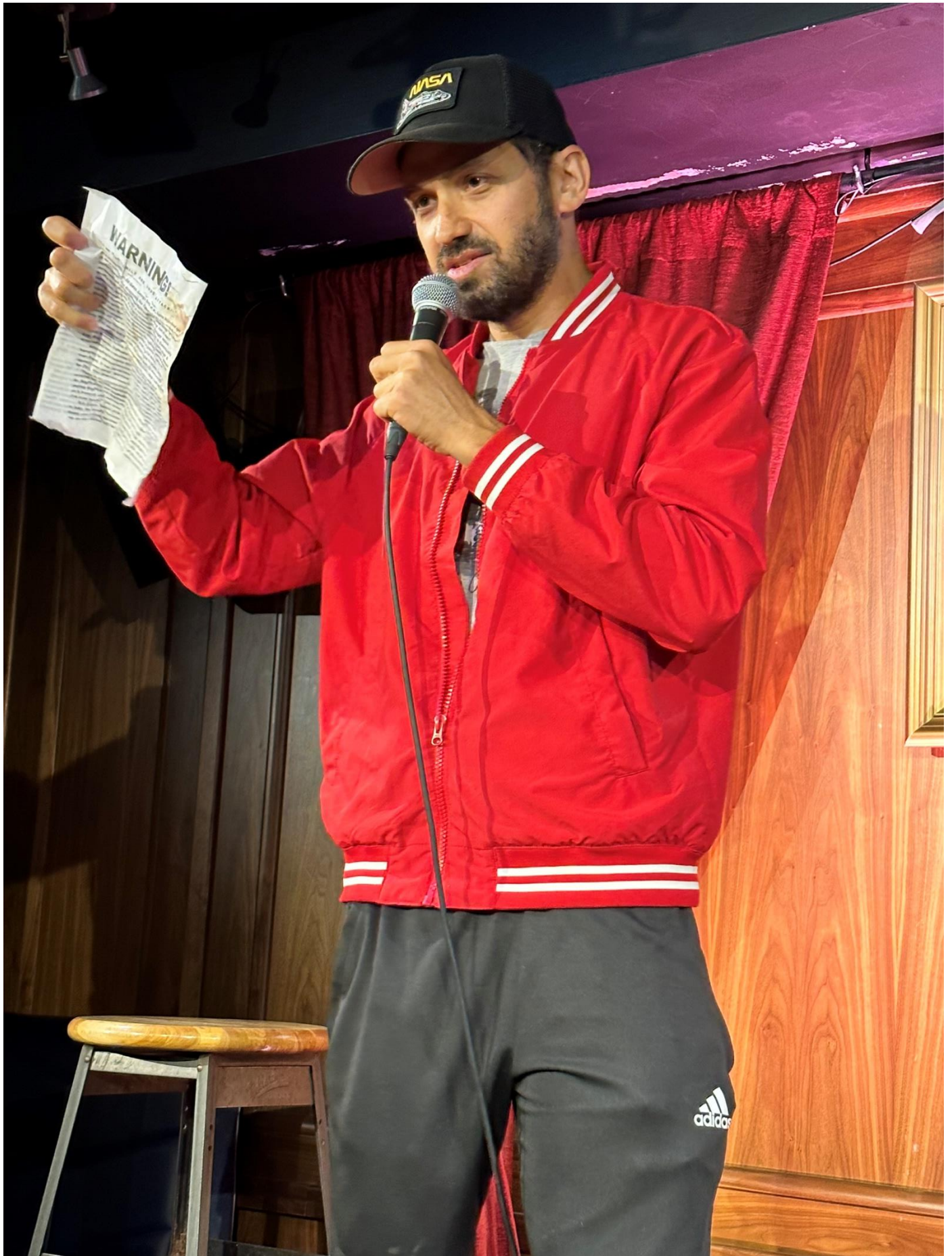
Hosting *The Winter Film Awards*



From *The Travel Channel TV Series Monumental Mysteries*



From *The National Geographic* show *Brain Games*



From Westside Comedy Club in New York City



Recent Headshot



From *The Discovery Channel TV series Street Justice: The Bronx*

THE WEEK IN REVIEWS

EDINBURGH COMEDY LEE LEVITT

Pony tales top the bill with further laughs from dating and mum issues

WOOLLY MAMMOTH PANIC ATTACK

Laughing Horse @ Jekyll is Hyde

SINGLEDOM IS a well-mined source of stand-up humour. But Matt Nagin's deliciously warped, non-PC treatment of the American dating scene is a joy.

The Jewish New Yorker quickly establishes an easy rapport with the packed late-night audience in the less than airy Aerie Room as he tears into the dating customs of "LA chicks" and their New York counterparts.

"You guys want some Jew jokes?" he then asks, before a brilliantly irreverent riff, taking in a Texan antisemite, slavery in Egypt and "Jesus Christowitz", of whom he suggests: "He needed to shrink it [his surname], so he could have a career in the entertainment industry."

Nagin also seamlessly works a sublimely funny Bob Dylan impression into his gloriously filthy act, which is part of the Free Festival.

Though the tempo dips a little midway through (perhaps under the weight of his dark humour), his love of performing shines through.

Until August 25

FAUX LATINO SHOW PONY

Assembly Hall

★★★★★

▶ FOR A hit of high class tomfoolery, Jacob Edwards delivers a masterclass in the art of silliness.

The Bucks-based actor and TV producer has some Edinburgh previous as half of the well-received Sunday Defensive.

And although his debut solo show has been a while coming, it proves worth the wait.

Attired in dinner jacket and jeans, he brings to the show a range of zany characters, one of whom "nets" a punter with a fishing rod baited with a cigarette packet.

And there is more than a hint of Steve Furst's alter ego Lenny Beige in his smooth-talking stand-up Remy Martin, who mouths insults drowned out by the theme music to *A Question of Sport*.

His egotistical sardo Roger Show-business parodies the sleazy underbelly of the industry while wiping his sweaty brow with a colourful bra.

You can detect a Cooganesque element to some of the comic creations. But when into his stride, there is some really surreal and original stuff from the Show Pony.

Until August 26

AL LUBEL IS MENTALLY AL

Just the Tonic at The Caves

★★★★☆

▶ PICTURE IN your mind Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, expunge the bloodshed and add a strong dollop of black Jewish humour and you have something approaching Al Lubel's savagely witty, mother-fixated act.

The former lawyer from West Hollywood mercilessly mimics his smothering Florida-based mother, with whom he has a love-hate relationship, in a self-revelatory late-night routine.

"Part of me wishes I was gay because I really need a man in my life," he declares, half-jokingly.

Lubel opens with an insanely funny, linguistically playful five-minute riff on his name. He then embarks upon a journey starting from birth in Queens, New York. "Stay in, Alan, there's a draught - you've got a wet head," he says, miming his mother. Then comes Hebrew school, with his mother waiting to pick him up in a car outside, his troubled, late puberty, his shortcomings as a lawyer and his difficulties forming relationships with women. All of it garnished with lashings of matriarchy.

It's poisonously hilarious and Lubel engages adeptly with the crowd.

Until August 25

LAURA LEVITES: SELFHELPLESS

Glided Balloon Levitt

★★★★☆

▶ LAURA LEVITES - "it's pronounced 'levitis', like a disease", she explains helpfully, hugging me, after a post-show confessional - performs a one-hour routine about drugs, denial and depression. Now depression can be a suitable subject for stand-up and the eBay-addicted, Prada bag loving, binge-cleaning, thirtysomething New Yorker displays courage in putting herself out there, inviting a reserved audience to pass judgment.

But the shrieky self-indulgence and the in-your-face reveling in miserableness doesn't really cut it.

A "did you do drugs like me because your parents divorced?" shock show rather than an illuminating attempt to explore the reasons.

Until August 26



Scot three: Laura Levites, Al Lubel and Jacob Edwards (above left) as the faux Latino Show Pony in Edinburgh

Review of my one man show at *The Edinburgh Fringe Festival*



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Comedian Garneres Laughs and Money for a Good Cause

102 MAR 2015 105:03



Local stand-up comic with Crohn's disease uses his talents to help others



Matt Nagin, a comedian who performed at the Gotham Comedy Foundation fundraiser last week, like most stand-up comedians, can't help cracking several jokes during regular conversation. But unlike most comedians, Nagin uses laughter as his own personal medicine.

"I have Crohn's disease, which is like, nobody really knows what that is," he said. "God forbid you get Lou Gehrig's disease, at least you get brand name recognition. People don't know who Crohn is."

Nagin, 36, a Chelsea resident, is part of the Gotham Comedy Foundation. Last week, Gotham Comedy Foundation held a fundraising night, where all proceeds went to support the charity.

The foundation's creator, Bill Drewes, who is in remission from cancer, always believed in laughter therapy. He and his team of comics, including Nagin, spread laughter to places like schools, hospitals and broadcast performances to people like war veterans and Holocaust survivors. But Nagin can especially relate to Drewes' theory of smiling away the pain. Ever since he started doing stand-up seven years ago, he noticed himself having a more positive attitude, and his chronic pain become less and less acute.

"To me, using laughter to deal with pain boosts your mood and increases your general well-being," said Nagin. "But I'm not going to say laughter cures any illness. If you have diabetes don't stop taking your insulin and just watch Judd Apatow films, but maybe if you do both you're better off."

NY Press feature story

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Continued/

What's your background and how does it relate to what you're doing now?

I don't really go into projects by thinking about the level of demand for the subject matter. Rather, I write because I'm compelled. Generally, my thought on this is that if it is interesting to me than it might be to someone else as well. Besides, usually if you go deep enough, or reach an authentic enough place in the work, it will be intriguing to others. So, for me, this is the critical goal...authenticity.

You do so many different types of writing and producing. What is your favorite area to work in??

Yes, I'm involved in acting, standup, writing, even a bit of filmmaking. But, of all these areas, I'd say writing is my primary passion. And, of all types of writing, ironically enough, I'd say the novel is my favorite. It's a more involved process and offers a level of depth that you can't get in perhaps any other creative mode. It's strange I feel this way, since I've yet to publish a novel.

Truth be told, I've written a few. They are just mostly in unfinished form. I've of late, started going back and trying to finish them, so that, eventually, I can put them out there.

The good part is the shorter works I've created have helped prepare me for the structural and aesthetic challenges a novel can present. In sum, I believe my voice has developed over the years and look forward, excitedly, to the projects just ahead.

Can you explain what your poetry is all about?

In the movie "The Gambler," after Lauren Hutton tells James Caan a horrific story, he quotes E.E. Cummings: "Buffalo Bills defunct." What does that mean? Certainly, he's referencing disappointment. Perhaps, even, it's an illusion to death, as mentioned in the poem. But it's not spelled out. Why? Because that's poetry.

Poetry is metaphor, enigma, parable, allusion. It's stretching out towards an idea but never quite landing on it. It's all the mysterious elements in the universe colliding, somehow, on the page. It's the absence, the lack, the thing you'd rather not explain clearly because that would ruin it. Anyway, that's how I see poetry.

In simplified terms, critics have called my writing imagistic, have compared it to beat poetry, and have suggested it is in the gnostic tradition. I'd also say it's heavily influenced by meditation, the psychedelic movement, transcendentalism and music. Finally, there is my preoccupation with death, which, for whatever reason, has been featured heavily in my poetic work.

What's going on in your head when you work on a book/poetry/performance? Your fears, anticipation, confidence, etc. How do you know something is finished or if it ever finished?

Whether I'm acting in a scene, or writing a book, not much is going on in my head, since I try to really immerse myself in the process. I'm not going say it's quite zen meditation, but it's something akin to that. I try to not be the person looking in on myself creating. Rather, I try to enter the process, to fully immerse myself, so that all else is put aside. The reason for this is, generally, the work is better when I operate this way.

I used to have great difficulty knowing when something was finished. I would not say this is the case anymore. I just get a sense of it, usually, it's instinctive. Besides, we have to give up on the work at some point. As Da Vinci wrote, "art is never finished, only abandoned."

Who if anyone influences your work?

There is a very long list. I mentioned some influences earlier, so here, I will just focus on some contemporary influences: Chuck Palahniuk, Denis Johnson, Phillip K.

"Poetry is metaphor, enigma, parable, allusion. It's stretching out towards an idea but never quite landing on it."

Dick, Brett Easton Ellis, Woody Allen, Nora Ephron. Then, too, like all writers, I'm influenced by my day-to-day experiences, by comedians and actors I meet, by students, by people I meet on the Subway, by groups I've been involved in, by travel, by anything, really, that strikes me as interesting.

I'm curious about how you choose what to work on. Is there a certain type of project or subject matter you gravitate towards?

I tend to gravitate towards material, that, in some way, is personally meaningful for me. In other words, I try to connect in my own past and experiences and put some of my own emotions into the work. Whether I am looking at incidents through a humorous lens or a poetic lens is not important to me. The key element is that putting matters through these creative filters provides an avenue for healing and understanding and play.

Secondarily, I often gravitate to material that others are not focusing on. Originality, is, of course, critical, and, in my case, this is one of my top priorities. I am always looking for something off the beaten path, in terms of subject matter, or, in the very least, something I can tell in a unique way. As Emily Dickinson once wrote, "tell the truth, but tell it slant."

What do you do to promote yourself and your productions?

Every month I send out an email blast. I also promote comedy shows on Eventbrite. Finally, there is Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, which are great for getting the word out there about your work. In terms of book sales, after readings or comedy shows, I find it is easier to sell books. The audience has gotten to know you and trusts you a bit more and often will be happy to support you. This may be the best way to get your work out there.

What's th future hold?

As I mentioned above, I am hoping to put out a few more books. I also would like to keep acting. Finally, I'd like to direct another short film, maybe even, one day, a feature.

I guess, in terms of an ultimate goal, it would be to produce more creative work about which I am proud and which represents me in the best possible light.

NAGIN

When did you first think about writing/acting as something you wanted to do? Were you encouraged or discouraged by family, friends, teachers, mentors?

I first started writing after reading a book by Jim Morrison, the lead singer of The Doors. Morrison's poetry seemed highly metaphorical, and, at times, almost transcendent, which I thought was really cool. I started reading other poets and filling up notebooks with my own work. At first, it mostly seemed a weird hobby. As time



"In short, the Matt Nagin you experience today continues to experiment with a wide-range of creative forms."

went on, though, I got more into it and started producing all types of creative work—essays, fiction, screenplays etc.

My family, for the most part, was discouraging. My mother wanted me to be a lawyer or doctor. My father thought I should follow in his footsteps and enter the real estate business. After a semester in Cornell's Hotel School, I switched to Arts and Sciences, becoming an English Major. This was upsetting to my family, but, with time, they learned to accept my path.

What kind of kid were you? Where did you grow up? What were your influences?

I grew up in small town on Long Island called Jericho. As a kid, I was, at one point, kind of shy and reserved. In third grade, in fact, the teacher put me in a special class for slow kids. This was ironic, since, in fourth grade, I was put in a class for gifted kids. I guess I've always been a bit of an enigma.

I used to get bullied quite a bit, and, because I could make crazy statements, at times, people tried to shut me up. I think this contributed to my wanting to be a writer. It also may have contributed to my interest in comedy, in particular, since I tend to push the envelope and aggravate some people today just as I had as a kid.



What's your background and how does it relate to what you're doing now?

I obtained a B.A. in English Literature from Cornell University and an M.A. in Humanities and Social Thought from NYU. This gave some grounding in the literary arts, and, after some more pedagogical training, I taught college writing at seven institutions over a period of fifteen years. Writing led to standup comedy and acting, both of which I am still engaged in. I'm also, of course, a writer, and, of late, I've published three books, the most recent one being a humor collection, "Do Not Feed The Clown



You've written in a couple different genres. How did that evolve into the Matt Nagin that we experience now?

I write in quite a few genres because, to me at least, genre is not as important as others think. In other words, many of the same principles apply, regardless of the type of writing. For example, poetic writing can be humorous and humorous writing can be sensual and detailed in a way that resembles poetry (indeed, this may add to the comedic effect).

Actually, changing the type of writing I do is part of my overall strategy as a writer. I think swiveling up genres keeps the writing fresh and interesting. I've continued with this trend, for, as it just so happens, my next two books (both of which I have drafts of) are in genres I have not attempted in book form to date: a short story collection (fiction) and comedic tales from my early days (memoir).

In short, the Matt Nagin you experience today continues to experiment with a wide-range of creative forms. I think this is intentional, on the one hand, and, on the other, part of my persona (I'm a Gemini, and, like my astrological chart suggests, a bit of a chameleon). I hope it helps make each book distinctive and keeps readers coming back to see what I'm up to next.



"My family, for the most part, was discouraging. My mother wanted me to be a lawyer or doctor. My father thought I should follow in his footsteps and enter the real estate business."

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MATT NAGIN



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Headlining *Festival of Fears*

BIO

Matt Nagin is not your average comedian. His unique blend of observational humor, biting satire, and absurdity has audiences rolling in the aisles. He's performed standup in seven countries, at *The Edinburgh Comedy Festival*, as well as on WPIX 11 on *The Dr. Steve Show*. He's further headlined many shows throughout the Southeast, including a *Festival of Fears* showcase. What is more, Matt has opened for notable comedians such as Robert Klein and Yannis Pappis, and performed alongside many renowned acts such as Jim Gaffigan, Eric Andre, Jim Breur, Todd Barry, Mark Normand etc.

Matt has also acted in numerous Film and TV roles, most recently in a scene with Al Pacino on the show *Hunters* on Amazon Prime. He also appeared in the hit comedy feature film, *Tango Shalom*, and in many other noteworthy projects, such as *Street Justice: The Bronx*, on The Discovery Channel.

Matt has been a writer for almost thirty years. His poem, "If We Are Doomed," won *The Spirit First Editor's Choice Award*. A short story, "The Failure," made *The Best of Across The Margin 2021*. He's published three poetry books, all of which obtained very strong reviews. *Kirkus Reviews*, for example, referred to Matt's first book as "powerful verse from a writer of real talent."

Matt's had satirical writing showcased in *The Humor Times*, *The Satirist*, *Points In Case*, *The Higgs-Weldon*, *The New York Post*, and many others. His first humor book, *Do Not Feed The Clown*, published in 2019 by *Tenth Street Press*, obtained superb reviews and garnered a cult following. Matt's latest offering is *The Book of Outcasts*, a short story collection that is already garnering terrific reviews. Finally, Matt wrote and directed a short film, *Inside Job*, that won awards on the festival circuit, including *Best Short at The Mediterranean Film Festival Cannes* and *Best Supporting Actor at the Nice International Film Festival*.

Matt has appeared on numerous podcasts and radio programs, such as *The New York City Crime Report*, *REELTalk With Audrey Russo*, *The Ed Tyll Show*, *He Said What*, *Kill The Cat Radio* and *The Dean Andrews Podcast*. He also created a number of original comedic characters such as Gunderbomb, Allison Allison, Captain Jack Nago, and Lil Crohn\$. Using the last of these aliases, Lil Crohn\$, Matt created an original comedic rap and music video, *Illest MC*, that quickly became a fan favorite. Finally, Matt's obtained press in numerous outlets, among them *NY Press*, *Real Creative Magazine*, *Riviera Insider*, *Times Herald-Record*, *The Jewish Chronicle*, and *Stagebuddy*.

Perhaps most importantly, Matt tries to help others. He spent several years as a Talent and Show Coordinator for *The Gotham Comedy Foundation*, a charitable organization that brings comedians into hospitals and senior centers. Matt further has long been involved with *The Crohn's and Colitis Foundation*, performing standup at benefits and contributing to the search for a cure. In 2019, Matt was granted the *Long Island Chapter's Mission Award*.

TESTIMONIALS

Matt is a very clever, innovative comic who is playing with the form and getting great results. He will leave his mark. Besides, he just makes me laugh.

-Rick Overton, *Emmy Winning Writer, Actor, and Comedian*

Matt put on an amazing show for our business! He had our audience laughing the entire night, and was able to bring a few other comics to really step up the event to a new level we never expected! Would highly recommend using Matt if you need an awesome comedian and someone super easy to work with!

-Andrew Wentz, *Executive Producer, Festival of Fears*

Matt displayed a natural, highly accessible story-telling talent. He did a great job of staying with the bonds of Jesuit school propriety while presenting a dynamic, engaging routine. I recommend him to perform at any other college that is looking for a respectful and perceptive comedian.

-Gabrielle Guterrez, *Vice President of Student Affairs, Academia Hispania, Fordham University, Rosehill Campus*

For a performance at The Garden City Hotel, sponsored by the CCFA, Matt brought his humanity, insight, and, of course, hysterical take on life. His accessibility and strong connection to the audience had our guests howling with laughter and nodding knowingly as they could relate to the truths revealed in his universal themes.

-Susan Gomberg, *Director of Development, CCFA*

Matt is able to present the essence of a debate in a clear, succinct way that connects to the reader on both an emotional and logical level.

-Cathie Whittenburg, *Editor GVP Report, States United To Prevent Gun Violence*

Matt is a very talented writer and comedian.

-Janine Avril, *Author, Nightlight*

Matt has the presence of a comedian on the rise.

-Adam Ullian, *Filmmaker/ Creator Yuletide Snapper*

Matt and I have appeared on many successful comedy shows over the past ten years. He is a brilliant, compelling comedy talent. Matt is a master of characters that make you laugh out loud. His jokes and performance style are infectiously funny and original.

-Ed Tyll, *Comedian & Host of Ed Tyll Show (BIG 810.AM)*

He did a wonderful job and everyone loved him. He was very professional and he also brought his own ideas to the table. I was very grateful.

-Donavant Samuels, *Wedding Organizer*

Matt was funny. He is good with people of all ages. Recommended for a family event and a fundraiser.

-Cathy Wolf, *School Administrator/Event Planner*

Matt was wonderful. He was so understanding of the needs of my guests. I thank him so much for his wonderful performance. He's a keeper. Great job, Matt. Beautiful, empowered women love Matt.

-Carmen Tirado-Rodriquez, *Fundraising Coordinator Lupus/Fibromyalgia/Women's Empowerment*

PRESS QUOTES

Standup-Comedy

"Uproarious...a stellar success."

---Alexis Yoo, *Stagebuddy*

"Brilliantly irreverent...sublimely funny."

--Lee Levitt, *The Jewish Chronicle*

Writing

"Powerful verse from a writer of real talent."

--*Kirkus Reviews*

"Nagin's short essays mix Frank Zappa, Lewis J. Carroll, and Monty Python together with a post-beatnik wacky introspection. An automatic attitude adjuster for those who wish to use comedy to feel good and relieved of woes."

--Ferris Butler, former Writer on *Saturday Night Live*

"This book will make you feel like you dropped acid, fell into a rabbit hole, and entered a kaleidoscopic world of hilarity."

--James Israel, Editor *The Humor Times*

Matt Nagin's writing is immediately arresting, always rife with complex and curious characters that while often eccentric, always feel relatable and authentic. His short stories are engaging, peculiarly addictive, and flat out fun.

--Michael Shields, Editor in Chief, *Across the Margin*

Nagin feels his work, writing it with gritted teeth, through a pen as sharp as a razor, and his cynicism is smart and infectious. Poetry of the highest quality.

--Matt McAvoy, *Matt McAvoy Book Review*

Filmmaking

"Very humorous [and] worth watching."

--Zachary Flint, *The Great Movie Debates*

"Weirdly wonderful."

--Richard Propes, *The Independent Film Critic*