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Tommy Tiernan at Comedy Works

Controversial Irish comic returns to Montreal July 1-3rd



By: Dan Laxer

Jun 29, 2010 - 12:05

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After a one-year absence, Ireland's most popular stand-up comedian is coming to Montreal!

Tommy Tiernan was either asked to pull out of last year's Just For Laughs's

Canadian Comedy Tour, or he chose not to attend to save the festival a bit of grief over some allegedly anti-Semitic comments he made at a news conference. The comments, which Tiernan has insisted were taken out of context, lead to a lot of criticism, and calls for Tiernan to apologize. But it's all water under the bridge now. This was not the first, nor will it be the last, controversy to dog Tiernan. But this one seems to have worn off, because Tiernan is headed back to town for an almost secret gig.

But he isn't coming to town for the Just For Laughs Festival. At least not for the Montreal edition; he's slated to perform at the Toronto edition, but Montrealers will still get the chance to see him perform here. Like most professional comics, Tiernan wants to test out some material before taking it to the big stage. So he'll be appearing at Montreal's [The Comedy Works](#) July 1, 2, 3.

It's a bit of an understatement to call Tiernan Ireland's most popular comedian; only U2 sells more concert tickets than he does. He has several #1-selling DVD's to his name, performs all over the world, and is used to selling out stadiums. The Comedy Works seats a maximum of 100, and that's pushing it. Club owner Jimbo (most journalists get his last name wrong, so he uses only his first name) says they weren't sure if they'd have Tiernan in for the gig, thinking audiences wouldn't be around leading up to Canada Day weekend. But ticket sales appear to be going well, despite minimum publicity, and Jimbo is hopeful that the shows may even sell out.

So why would Tommy Tiernan, this world-class, zany, and controversial comedian play a small room like The Comedy Works? Tiernan's good friend, Montreal comedian [Joey Elias](#), who will be opening for Tiernan on July 2, says it's "like Bruce Springsteen going back to the bar where he first started playing" to prepare for a world tour. It's all about rehearsing his act, which means people in Montreal will be able to see Tiernan's show first hand, in its rawest form, before he unleashes it on Toronto.

The Comedy Works is currently housed on the site of what had at one time been [Ernie Butler's Comedy Nest](#). The Nest has moved around a lot over the years, but now has a permanent home inside Montreal's Pepsi Forum. The Works and The Nest are known as Montreal's 2 flagship comedy clubs, each showcasing rising stars as well as local up-and-comers and weekly open-mic nights.

Montreal's [Just For Laughs Festival](#) runs through the month of July. Watch this space for highlights.

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Dan Laxer is an announcer at Montreal's CJAD Radio, a budding stand-up comedian, and a writer. He is Citeeze's entertainment writer.

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