

Punch lines

Roman Danylo lives for laughs on **Comedy Inc.**

Having started his career as an improviser is a bit of a mixed blessing, says Roman Danylo from *Comedy Inc.*

Danylo is the head writer and host of the weekly sketch comedy series, which is currently repeating its second season on The Comedy Network.

"Improvisers are notoriously known for being lazy," he says. "You learn that you can be there and not have to prepare. You don't need to learn lines."

The flip side of that, he says, is that improv is a wonderful training ground for comedy writing, because the whole time you're onstage, you're writing your material as you go along.

"You learn how to write on your feet," Danylo points out. "So it's a great training ground for learning how to do sketch comedy, because you learn all the basics, and you learn to do it really, really fast."

A native of Calgary, Danylo got his start working with improv guru Keith Johnstone, who runs a Calgary improv theatre called the Loose Moose and also invented TheatreSports.

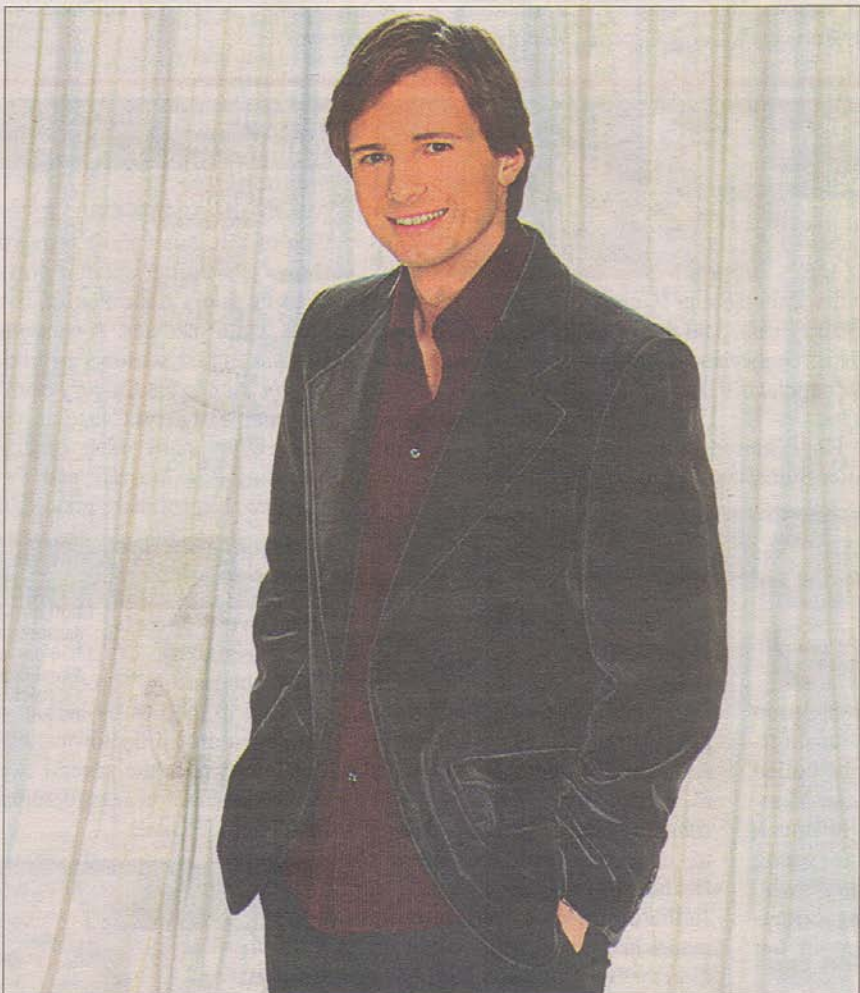
Now, Danylo lives in Vancouver, where he does a regular gig at a local club.

"I love it," he says. "Once a week, when I'm in town, it's where all my friends are."

Before joining *Comedy Inc.*, Danylo did a series of specials for CTV and The Comedy Network, including *Improv Heaven and Hell* and *Comedy Now!* He also has appeared in such films as *Duets* with Gwyneth Paltrow and *Happy Birthday* with John Goodman, as well as the TV series *Made in Canada* and *These Arms of Mine*.

Yet he still does "a lot of corporate work" – entertaining conventioners and executives at meetings and awards banquets.

"I enjoy that kind of stuff," Danylo says with a laugh. "You get put up in nice hotels and they're really happy to see you. They're really craving entertainment. They've spent eight hours listening to dry lectures. Then, they see a guy like me come in and it's: 'Whew! We don't have to take notes.'"



Danylo: lazy?

For *Comedy Inc.*, Danylo spends his summers with fellow cast members Aurora Browne, Jen Goodhue, Terry McGurrin, Jenn Robertson, Winston Spear, Gavin Stephens, Albert Howell and Ian Sirota. And, while the second season was having its initial run on CTV and The Comedy Network, they were already putting together the third. The entire 13-episode run is written in early summer, rehearsed over a span of a couple of weeks and shot over the course of 10 days.

"We shoot a lot of our show in advance, so we can't be topical," Danylo says. "Whatever's happening in the paper that week, we can't deal with that."

The focus of the show's comedy has a definite tilt toward the looney, with subject matter ranging from a truly bizarre *Vagina Monologues for Kids* to a surreal take on choosing a pope.

"When you come up with a joke, you want to give it the best chance of being marketable for years to come," Danylo says. "So when I write something, I try to make sure it's not too regional or too specific to any time."

The approach seems to be working. As well as having a guarantee of another season on CTV and Comedy, the series was recently bought by the American-based Spike TV.

"They picked it up after the season had been completed – which is great," Danylo says. "We don't have to tailor it to them."

"That's what I really like about our show. We seem to be just doing it for us – whatever makes us laugh."

PHOTOS: CTV, CBS

COMEDY INC.
Wednesdays; The Comedy Network