

NEW TO COCA: THE BLACK JEW DIALOGUES

Ron Jones

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This year's conference marks the first year that the internationally acclaimed social justice comedy *"The Black Jew Dialogues"* will be in the great white north. This two-man multimedia comedy has won raves of praise on hundreds of college campuses across the United States.

Originally conceived as a theatre show, the duo of Emmy-award winner **Ron Jones** and veteran performer **Larry Jay Tish** premiered the show at the *Edinburgh Fringe Festival* in 2006. They quickly became one of the hottest tickets. Equally as quick was the response by high school and college students requesting them to bring the show to their campuses. Within two years *Campus Activities Magazine* recognized the duo as one of the *Best Diversity Programs* on the US college scene.



What makes the show so successful is the combination of fast paced provocative comedy and the message of cul-



tural understanding. The show uses interactive video, puppetry, sketches, and even a game show to take their audience through a laugh-out-loud journey through some of our closest held beliefs and mis-beliefs. With hundreds of shows in their wake in the US and UK they are more excited than ever to enter the COCA family.

Ron Jones is no stranger to Canada, having worked for *The Comedy Network* for two years on *"The World Championships of Improv"* where he was the captain of the American team of improvisers. His experience in Canada has given him some insight into the way racism and bigotry play out there as well. "We have made some changes that relate to the Canadian experience specifically, but the fundamental message of the show is the same" Jones says about the show. "These issues are never easy to talk about, but we know the show re-



ally gets people to open up and start what we hope will be the beginning of a process of dialogue," adds co-creator Larry Jay Tish.

The "opening up" that Tish had mentioned, takes place in the form of the post-show discussion that the duo facilitate after every performance. They open up the floor to allow the audience to examine the issues and forms of racism and hatred that the show brings up. During their discussion they take on the media's impact in perpetuating stereotypes as well as religious and sexual intolerance and islamophobia just to name a few. The audience often shares personal stories of their difficulties as well as their moments of overcoming and standing up to intolerance. Larry and Ron have spoken to thousands of people about what motivates prejudice and what we all need to do to overcome it. The duo have been told the impact of their show resonates on campuses long after they have left.

For those who will be in London Ontario June 16th -29th, the show will be headlining at the *London Fringe Festival*.

www.theblackjewdialogues.com

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