

'NOBODIES' PERFECT

Comedians will perform as part of LMC's Mendel Center 'Artists You Should Know' series

By JEREMY D. BONFIGLIO
HP Features Writer

BENTON HARBOR — Chris Doucette is OK with being called a nobody.

The stand-up comic and his compatriots Matt Bergman, Tony Deyo and Andy Pitz may not be household names just yet, but Doucette knows there are worst fates than traveling across the country performing under the banner the "Nobodies of Comedy."

"If there's one thing the comedy industry teaches you, it's that it is a very humbling business," Doucette says by telephone from New York City. "I'm sure there are other comics out there who wish they could be a nobody."

While Nobodies of Comedy may not be the most flattering of names, Doucette, Bergman, Deyo and Pitz can find solace in the fact that when they perform Saturday at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center Mainstage it will be as part of the school's Artists You Should Know series. That, at its heart, is really what the assemblage of up-and-coming stand-up comics is all about.

"There are a lot of people who may not be household names who are still incredibly funny," Doucette says. "There's a variety of opinions and points of view so it's just a really fun show."

The rotating group of comics all have impressive resumes.

Deyo, for example, who is known for his sharp, quick and clean material, has performed at the prestigious HBO Aspen Comedy Festival, has been heard on The Bob & Tom Radio Show, and recently appeared on "Conan."

Pitz has landed spots on "The Late Show with David Letterman" and "The Late Show with Craig Ferguson," and his material can be heard regularly on XM/Sirius satellite radio's clean comedy station. And Bergman has toured non-stop with his sarcastic style and absurd observations to become a favorite on the comedy club circuit.

As for Doucette, he's written jokes for "Glee" star Jane Lynch, and performed on FOX, NPR and WAMU (88.5-FM) radio in Washington, D.C. He got his start after realizing he needed a change



Photo provided

Chris Doucette is one of four stand-up comedians stopping by Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center Mainstage on Saturday for "Nobodies of Comedy."

IF YOU GO

- **WHAT:** Nobodies of Comedy with Chris Doucette, Matt Bergman, Tony Deyo and Andy Pitz
- **WHEN:** 8 p.m. Saturday
- **WHERE:** Lake Michigan College Mendel Center Mainstage, 2755 E. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor
- **HOW MUCH:** \$25-\$32
- **CONTACT:** 927-1221 or www.lmcmainstage.org
- **ARTIST INFO:** chrisdoucette.com; tonydeyo.com; mattbergmancomedy.tumblr.com; andypitz.com

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from his nonprofit career in Washington, D.C.

"I went into nonprofit work to make the world a better place," Doucette says. "I worked for about 10 years and I realized the world was not getting any better. I wasn't helping the world in any way. So I thought I might as well make fun of it."

Inspired by a coworker who invited him to watch her perform at an open mic event, Doucette took the comedy plunge, although his first night on stage remains a bit fuzzy.

"I know I went up and did my five minutes and I was sweating profusely," he says. "At first I thought it was just nerves but as it turns out it was actually because I had the flu."

Although he describes his comedy as a "grab bag of what I'm thinking about," Doucette says his comedy didn't start out as honest as it is today.

"I talk with a lot of other gay comedians and it appears that many of us follow a similar path," Doucette says. "I'm not going to talk about my sexuality because I don't want it to be a distraction or become a stereotype. After a few months or a year of telling regular jokes, the desire to be genuine and sincere trumps any fear of being a stereotype. When I started talking about my life in a genuine way I think I became funnier."

There's also been plenty to talk about. Doucette is the son of a truck driver. He is the youngest of four siblings and the first in his family to go to college, graduating from Cornell University. "And I threw it all away to become a stand-up comedian," he says, laughing.

Although Doucette has received recognition from the lesbian and gay community for his act – The Advocate referred to him as "The Best of LGBT Comedy" – he is still careful of how many of those bits make it into the set.

"So much about stand-up comedy is based on who you are and where your identity is, and certainly if you're gay it becomes an important factor of who you are," Doucette says.



Photos provided

(From top) Matt Bergman, Andy Pitz and Tony Deyo will all perform Saturday during the "Nobodies of Comedy" show at Lake Michigan College's Mendel Center Mainstage.

"When you're a gay comic, obviously you being gay and most of the audience being straight, that difference becomes an interesting ground for material, but it can also be too easy. And I don't want to become a one-dimensional comedian. It's about my life. It's about relationships. It's about politics. It's about pop culture."

When asked to share some of his act, Doucette launches into a self-deprecating bit about his short stature.

"I'm 5-foot-6," he says. "I weigh 110 pounds. And I'm super skinny and pale."

He pauses before

delivering the punch line. "If I lose 5 more pounds Angelina Jolie will adopt me."

Fortunately for Doucette, and his fellow "Nobodies," being adopted by Hollywood royalty isn't the only path to becoming a somebody.

"It may not be a flattering name but it is a very flattering show to be a part of," Doucette says. "I've done several of these shows now, and after I perform I go sit in the audience so I can catch the rest of the show. That's how good they all are."

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