

## Laughing Stock: Jill Kimmel at the O and a Boy-Free Stage at Hotel McCoy

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- Clay Braasch
- Autumn Horvat—comedian, host, booker, rabble-rouser—is at Hotel McCoy on Friday, June 28.

### A boy-free stage at Hotel McCoy

Tucson comedians tell no jokes on their private Facebook page. It's all about stage time, except when interrupted every few weeks by the kind of dustup typical of that medium. Last week a flurry of emotional debate circled around how few local women are seen on local comedy stages. When comedian Autumn Horvat called out a particular local open mic on the matter, a feeding frenzy ensued.

No one denied that local comedy lineups rarely include more than zero to one woman, but men defended the status quo objectively: Women are a small fraction of Tucson's comedian population, and even they are frequently unavailable for shows.

"I think that just going up as a woman is more of a challenge," Horvat says. "I think people are conditioned to think men are funny, but women have to prove themselves. I feel like some men in our scene already have decided that we aren't funny and they won't listen to us."

Wait. Men don't listen?

"I also feel like men have an easier time getting started," Horvat adds. "Other men will (mentor) them, take new male comics under their wings, pay attention to their sets and offer them tips."

With women comics, she adds, that situation often feels like a dating dynamic. Also, some men apparently still have a problem relating to women who may be as smart and funny as them. We feel a facepalm coming on.

Chad Lehrman, a Tucson show promoter who also runs a local comedy series, is very aware of the issue. He already had planned a comedy show to address it: Comedians Who Are Not Boys, at 8 p.m. Friday, June 28 at Hotel McCoy.

He invited Horvat to book the comedians and host the show. "I just named it Comedians Who Aren't Boys at the McCoy because it rhymed," Lehrman says, not even wincing. "I wasn't sure, but Autumn liked it."

Asked if he thought women are more difficult to book, he answers with a firm and simple "no." He notes, too, that there are more women than ever now on the national scene. "There's more of everybody though," he says, "Indians, Asians, gay comics and women."

As part of the McCoy Hotel's Last Friday, Last Laugh series, the Comedians Who Are Not Boys show is free. The bar is open and a food truck is available. Besides Horvat, who also hosts, the lineup includes Mo Urban of The C\*nt Show and The Dating Game, and Priscilla

Fernandez, host of the long-running Retro Game show at Hotel Congress. Others are Chinna Garza, Rebecca Tingley, Nicole Riesgo and Cierra Renee Miranda.

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- Jill Kimmel Comedy
- Jill Kimmel is just like us, at The O, Saturday, June 22.

### **Jill “Yes, She’s Jimmy’s Sister” Kimmel comes to The O**

Since we’re on the topic, Jill Kimmel has life stories to share about being a woman in comedy. She’s a mother of two teenage children, and the first to say that all by itself motherhood is a barrier to the open-mic training and travel required to be a comedian.

“If I didn’t have my parents (to take care of the children), I don’t think I would have been able to start doing comedy, to go out on the road and do it full time,” Kimmel says.

A Phoenix native, Kimmel performs at The O, 2000 N. Oracle Road, at 8 p.m. Saturday, June 22. Tickets are \$10 on Eventbrite or at the door.

Asked to describe her own comedy, she quickly denies political content but doesn't turn down a comparison to Roseanne Barr.

“She always was the overweight housewife talking about her relationships and raising kids and being married and how horrible it was,” Kimmel says. “I’m not talking about politics, I’m not insulting people, I’m talking about myself, my life. Every time I go somewhere I haven’t been, people tell me I’m not going to be young enough, cool enough, sexy enough. But no matter where I go, people relate to a 40-year-old woman who’s divorced, back in the dating pool, has children in school, has lost weight, gained weight.... It’s just a lot of stuff that’s very relatable. (People) go ‘Yeah, that happened to me. Oh my God!’ I love that!”

Kimmel has worked with Jimmy Fallon, Norm Macdonald and Jeffrey Ross. She’s performed at Stand Up Live, the Improv comedy club and The Comedy Store, among other well-known venues. She creates the weekly segment “What A Mouth” on the “Lu Valentino Show.”

Kimmel suggests that women who don’t get booked enough should start their own shows. She names Tucson comics Mo Urban and Roxy Merrari as examples who have not only benefitted from their own shows but have used them to lift up other women comedians. Autumn Horvat, for example, got her start on Merrari’s Comedy at the Wench series.

For others, she advises, “Just be seen more and network more. I find that the women ... booked on shows are the ones who hustle. They’re out there, they’re working and networking. They’re nice and they’re funny.”

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