

Stage 2 Improv opens today in Naples

Anything can,
and will, happen
during shows
at Sugden

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Sometimes you'll be a finalist in something called the Bathtub-Scrubbing Olympics.

Sometimes you'll play a round of golf — not with a golf club, mind you, but with an octopus.

Sometimes someone will squirt you in the face with a water bottle, casually dry his hands on a towel and then just leave you standing there — soaking.

That's what makes improv comedy so exciting, says comedian Synthia DuBose.

You never know just who you'll be or what you'll do when you step onto that stage.

"I don't know if I'm going to be a lobster tonight or a nun," says DuBose, 25, of Fort Myers.

So almost anything can happen this weekend when the brand-new Stage 2 Improv takes the stage at Sugden Theatre in downtown Naples.

That's the point, after all.

"You don't have a script, so you never know what you're going to get," says Judith Gangi Santos, 43, who co-founded Stage 2 with husband Mike Santos. "It's like Forrest Gump."

Stage 2 rose out of the former Naples City Improv, which performed in Naples from 2008 to 2012. The new group gets its name from its new home, the secondary Tobye Studio stage in Sugden Thea-



Bradrik Von Goetz, left, and Casey Debrowski practice a game during rehearsal for the Stage 2 Improv shows at the Sugden Community Theatre in Naples. AMANDA INSCORE/THE NEWS-PRESS

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Former Naples City Improv members Judith and Mike Santos had been thinking about starting a new improv group. And that's when The Naples Players broached the subject.

"They asked us if we wanted to do a show," says Mike Santos, 31, who works as technical director for The Naples Players "And we said, absolutely! We were already thinking of putting a company together!"



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Video: See Stage 2 Improv rehearsing for their show

Now, two months and one casting call later, the 12 members of Stage 2 Improv are performing for three weeks in the Tobye Studio. Each show features a rotating cast of five or six performers.

If you've never seen improv comedy, just think about the hit TV show "Whose Line Is It

Anyway?" with comedian Drew Carey. The cast performs short scenes, skits, songs and comedy games — all based on audience suggestions. The better the audience, the better the show.

"All of what we do is made up on the spot, onstage," Mike Santos says. "Without an audience, we can't do much. Well, we could. But it wouldn't be very interesting!"

IF YOU GO

- » **What:** Stage 2 Improv
- » **When:** Opens today and continues through June 22. Performances are 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. There is also one matinee at 2 p.m. this Sunday.
- » **Where:** Tobye Studio in Sugden Community Theatre, 701 Fifth Ave. S., downtown Naples
- » **Tickets:** \$15 (\$10 for ages 18 and younger)
- » **Info:** 256-7990 or naplesplayer-s.org

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