

An open letter to comedians who are interested in appearing in

## **Tim Spinosi's Colossal Comedy Side Show**

To: Comics/performers interested in appearing in the Colossal Comedy Side Show.

From: Tim Spinosi - director of Tim Spinosi's Colossal Comedy Side Show.

Thank you very much for your interest in performing in the Colossal Comedy Side Show. Beginning September 8, 2017 the Side Show will be replacing the Stardome's Open Mike Showcase show, but will continue to be run as an open mike contest format. Why are we rebranding the show? Well over the last several years, they've have been and continue to be several open mike shows running regularly around the city of Birmingham ... all of them are currently called open mike.

Simply stated, this is the Stardome. We are not the same as the other clubs in town, nor do we wish to be. We have a 33 year storied history of launching successful comedy careers. Throughout the years everyone from Steve Harvey and Sinbad to Roy Woods Jr. (currently a correspondent on The Daily Show) have launched out of the Stardome, along with many others. Far too many to be listed here. It is the purpose of the Comedy Side Show to find the next group of comics to become regular performers on the big stage of the Stardome, as hosts, features and ultimately as headliners.

Why are we called the Side Show? Well one hundred years ago – before the Internet, television, or even the radio – there was the golden age of the circus. There were two types of shows the circus featured. The first was the big top. In the context of the Stardome, that would be the big room otherwise known as the main showroom. The other type of show was the sideshow. There were traditionally two types of sideshows: freak shows and burlesque. Freak show featured oddities and rare curiosities. These could be anything from a two-headed goat to a woman with a beard. The other type of show was burlesque. Burlesque shows were basically stripper venues. But in between the strip tease acts guys would come up and tell jokes. This was the true birthplace of stand up comedy. Just for the historical record burlesque was eventually spun off into it's own “thing” known as Vaudeville. Eventually during the age of

Vaudeville the comedians began to out sell the strippers. Also just for the record in so far as I can tell there are currently no strip clubs within the city limits of Hoover and the Stardome has no plans of becoming the first. So guys don't get your hopes up. I am calling my show the sideshow for two reasons:

1. To honor the place where stand up comedy began.
2. Because just as the early sideshows were the beginning of stand up comedy, I hope that my sideshow will be the beginning of your career as a stand up comedian.

### **What is expected of me if perform in The Colossal Comedy Side Show?**

Way back in the mid nineties I hosted and directed the Open Mike Nite and the Comics Nite Out shows at the Stardome, and not to put too fine a point on it ... I sucked at it. During the years that followed those shows I have watched all those who came after me do a much better job than I ever did. So my goal is to do better this time. Much better. As I stated above there are several open mike shows running on various nights around the city of Birmingham. Back when I had the shows in the nineties if you appeared in one of those other venues, you would be banned from ever playing the Stardome. We're not going to do that this time a round. In fact I am personally encouraging you to go and perform in as many of these open mike sets as you can get. The more time you spend performing in front of a live audience the more comfortable you will become at it. Simply stated when you come to the Side Show I want you to be at your best. A big part of getting good at this is how funny your material is, but the other part - which is every bit as important - is how comfortable you are in front of an audience.

Ok Tim, but what makes the Side Show any different than the other open mike shows around town? Well first off ... obviously this is the Stardome. While I'm certain the odd rock band has launched from the Nick, as far as I know no comic ever has. Comedians launch out of the Stardome all the time. But more importantly it's a matter of attitude and philosophy. When you perform at those other shows you are just a comic doing his or her time on that stage. Nothing more. Nothing less. When you perform in the Comedy Side Show you are - from that point

forward - a cast member of this show. And that is how I would like you to think of it. As a cast member of the Side Show - with in the framework of your part of the show - what can you do to make the overall show best it can be? I would appreciate if you would always try to be at your best here. Practice your material out there, perfect it here. Also don't hesitate to try things here you might not be comfortable performing elsewhere. If you've ever considered doing a routine in character but were uncomfortable doing it in bar room setting, bring it here. Feel free to be theatrical and creative. The Comedy Side Show should always be a place to try interesting and unusual things. As a cast member I would appreciate it if you always act and dress professionally. The Stardome just went through a series of very expensive renovations and is one of the nicest clubs in town. Please show the proper amount of respect when here. Show up to my show wearing shorts and flip-flops and I'll bounce you out of here. If you wouldn't wear it to your day job, don't wear it here.

**The Comedy Business and/or Tim Spinosi's  
49-step program to a comedy launch pad**

Ok ... you guessed it this is the business portion of this letter. Comedy is a business. A business you are trying to enter and theoretically make a living at. The Stardome is also a business. Yes it's a legendary venue, but that venue has to remain profitable or it goes away. And so for the Comedy Side Show to continue we must to have an audience that pays to see the show. That is where each of you comes in. As has previously been the policy in the past at the Open Mike Showcase if you are performing in the show you must bring at least four audience members - more if possible - with you. In other words bring your own crowd with you. This is a judged competition, the more people in the audience that are supportive of you the better your odds of winning are. Also you have to promote yourselves. This includes sending out copies of the show flyer whenever you are appearing. I will make the flyers available for download on the Colossal Comedy Side Show page on the Stardome's website. [www.stardome.com](http://www.stardome.com). Eventually I will have a printable version of the flyer available so you can pass them out to audience members as the leave the show when performing at other venues around town.

\* Note: please ask permission from the owner/manager of those other venues before passing out Stardome Side Show flyers, as some may not

like you doing that at their clubs. Remember the more people in the crowd for you the better if you want to win and go to the grand finale on the main stage. The grand finale for this season will take place on the big stage of the main show room at the Stardome in January. The purpose of the grand finale is to allow Stardome owners Bruce and Cheche Ayers to see the best of the Side Show performers for themselves. The Ayers almost never come into the little room so this is your chance to be seen by them.

Whenever comics from the southeast travel to other parts of the country to perform they are all asked by the other comics they meet, "How do you get to perform at the Stardome?" Well traditionally the way that works is you make it to the point where you are headlining regularly, selling out other venues, have a solid fan following, and a manager/agent who calls the booking agent at the Stardome on your behalf and they get you booked in. Beyond that the only other way to play the main stage at the Stardome is thru the Side Show. The Side Show is the gateway to the main stage. As I said before, win in the Side Show and you will go to the main stage. Do well there and the club will start booking you as a regular opening act. There is one other way but it is so rare that I hesitate to bring it up. In very rare circumstances I may see an act that I think is so uniquely and extremely promising, that I will ask Bruce to come to the show and sit in to see that act. But again ... very rarely does this or will this happen. Beyond that I would say don't get discouraged, this takes time to learn at get comfortable with. Just because you've written a great routine doesn't mean you're going to perform it great right out of the gate. Timing takes time to learn. Always keep coming back and practicing both here and the other open mike shows.

What exactly is Tim Spinosi's 49-step program to a comedy launch pad? Actually I just explained it to you. But just to make it simple. The distance from the microphone on the Side Show stage to the microphone on the big stage is exactly 49 steps. I know, because I counted them. My job is to hold your hand and walk you thru things until I can deliver you to that stage.

So if you have always wanted to pursue a career in stand up comedy but didn't know how to go about it, then please take a moment to fill out the

online registration form located on the Comedy Side Show page of the Stardome's website at: [stardome.com](http://stardome.com). That is where it starts.

Thank you again for your interest in the Colossal Comedy Side Show and for taking time to read this letter. And remember the only thing that separates us from the people who pay to see us is our ability and willingness to be silly. Never stop being silly.

Thank you,  
Tim Spinosi  
Director of Tim Spinosi's  
Colossal Comedy Side Show