

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



Two of Canada's top comedians put on local show

Shaun Majumder and Jessica Holmes headline Manulife Evening of Comedy

For Immediate Release

**August 16, 2006
55-06**

**Contact: Brian Breckles
Director, Alumni Relations
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3174**

**or Lori Chalmers Morrison
Public Affairs Officer
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070**

WATERLOO – Award-winning comedians Shaun Majumder from *This Hour has 22 Minutes* and Jessica Holmes from the *Royal Canadian Air Farce* will bring their celebrity spoofs and political parodies to Waterloo as headliners of the Manulife Evening of Comedy. The event takes place on Saturday September 23 at 7:30 p.m. in the Wilfrid Laurier University Athletic Complex. Laurier alumni Alex Kojfman and James Gangl will perform opening improv acts, and Laurier graduate and Much Music VJ Matte Babel will emcee the event.

“We all know Shaun Majumder and Jessica Holmes from their TV shows and their comedy specials, so we’re thrilled that they’re coming to Laurier,” says Brian Breckles, Laurier’s alumni relations director. “They’ll put on a great show that will allow us to bring together the local community, Laurier students and alumni.”

In addition to his role on *This Hour has 22 Minutes*, Majumder has been featured on The Comedy Network, CBS’s *The Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn*, and appeared in feature films. He has performed at the *Just for Laughs* comedy festival in Montreal, and hosted numerous CBC *Just for Laughs* television specials.

Branded the “It girl of Canadian comedy,” Holmes is known for her regular role on the *Royal Canadian Air Farce*, as well as for creating her own one-hour Comedy Now!

- more -

special, *Holmes Alone*, and her CTV sketch comedy series, *The Holmes Show*. She has also opened for Jerry Seinfeld and Leslie Nielsen.

Babel co-hosts Much Music's *The It List*, *Much on Demand*, and *Much 911*.

The event is open to the public and forms part of Laurier's 78th annual homecoming lineup. Tickets are \$15, \$20, \$25, and can be ordered online at: www.wlu.ca/comedy.

Event sponsors include Manulife Financial, Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union and Laurier Alumni. Media sponsors include 105.3 Kool FM, Oldies 1090, Kicx 106.7 FM, 91.5 The Beat, and The Record.

BACKGROUND

Wilfrid Laurier University



MANULIFE EVENING OF COMEDY – WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY HOMECOMING EVENT

August 15, 2006

Contact: Lori Chalmers Morrison
Public Affairs Officer
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070

Date:	Saturday September 23, 2006
Time:	7:30 p.m.
Location:	Wilfrid Laurier University Athletic Complex
Cost:	Adults \$15, \$20 or \$25
Headliners:	Shaun Majumder – This Hour Has 22 Minutes Jessica Holmes – Royal Canadian Air Farce
MC:	Matte Babel, Much Music VJ and Laurier grad
Opening Acts:	Improv comedians and Laurier grads Alex Kojfman and James Gangl
Event Sponsors:	Manulife Financial Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union Laurier Alumni
Media sponsors:	105.3 Kool FM Oldies 1090 Kicx 106.7 FM 91.5 The Beat The Record

Further Information: www.wlu.ca/comedy

SHAUN MAJUMDER – This Hour Has 22 Minutes

Contact: Sara Kim Turnbull, The Lavin Agency (800) 265-4870 ext. 273

Website: www.shaumajumder.com

Shaun Majumder is renowned for his ability to create hilarious, endearing and memorable comic characters. Whether it's on This Hour Has 22 Minutes, in one of his CBC comedy specials, or at such live venues as Just for Laughs, his humour gently prods our sensibilities while provoking genuine guffaws of laughter.

- more -

Background information from CBC website:

Shaun returns to CBC this fall for the 13th season of the Gemini Award winning Canadian hit series *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. Born and raised in Newfoundland, Shaun began his career on the stages of the famous Second City and comedy clubs across the country, and now lives in Los Angeles.

Shaun was a member of the famous sketch comedy group *The Bob Room*. His clever unique style of comedy earned him his very own one-hour comedy special on *The Comedy Network* called *On the Edge* with Shaun Majumder, earning him a Gemini nomination. His second Gemini nomination was for the Halifax Comedy Festival. In 2002 he received the Canadian Comedy Award for "Pretty Funny Stand Up". Shaun's television appearances include CBS's *The Late Late Show* with Craig Kilborn and Comedy Central's *Premium Blend*. His feature film credits include *Harold & Kumar*, *Ladies Man*, *Pushing Tin* and *Purpose*.

Shaun is proud and honored to have joined the prestigious list of comedians who have performed at the renowned *Just For Laughs Comedy Festival* in Montreal. As well he has hosted numerous CBC *Just For Laughs Television Specials*. He has also appeared as a series regular on *Cedric The Entertainer Presents* for FOX Television.

Shaun has recently completed a number of projects including Host of the *Just for Laughs Comedy Fest* for CBC Television and co-starring with Mary Walsh in *Hatching, Matching and Dispatching* a six-part comedy series scheduled to broadcast on CBC Television in January of 2006.

Other information:

The early days of Shaun's entertainment career began as an announcer for the YTV game show *CLIPS*, and he was soon hosting the network's popular morning kids show called *Brain Wash*, where he was known simply as Ed. He was also a star of *Cedric the Entertainer Presents*, aired in the United States on the Fox network.

Majumder often plays an alter ego called Raj Binder. Binder is an Indian reporter with an accent, who profusely sweats. He is part of a feature for *Just For Laughs* called "Backstage With Binder" where he interviews the comedians after their performance.

JESSICA HOLMES – Royal Canadian Air Farce

Contact: Jaime Fernandez, Speakers' Spotlight (800)333-4453 ext. 210 or Jaime@speakers.ca

Website: www.jessicaholmes.net

Jessica Holmes, an Ottawa native and a regular on CBC's *Royal Canadian Air Farce*, wrote and starred in her own one-hour *Comedy Now!* special, "Holmes Alone," which won a 2001 Platinum Award at the Worldfest International Film Festival and was nominated for a Gemini Award. Her work on the Second City production "The Best of the Very Last" earned her a nomination for the prestigious Tim Sims Scholarship. She is also known for her work on *The Comedy Network* and CTV's hilarious, edgy, Carol Burnett-style sketch comedy, *The Holmes Show*.

Jessica has brought the house down opening for such comedians as Jerry Seinfeld and Leslie Nielsen. She is Canada's fastest rising comedy star and always leaves audiences in stitches with her interactive humour and vivacious energy. This year she is performing in two televised comedy specials at *Just for Laughs* and the *Winnipeg Comedy Festival*.

Jessica's comedic high jinks and crazy antics, her knack for skewering celebrities such as Céline Dion and Liza Minelli, along with her original creations, amuse even the most straight-faced audiences. Whether hosting or performing her hilarious characters, Holmes always leaves the audience in stitches.

Biography from Jessica's website:

Jessica Holmes has quickly become one of Canada's top comedic actresses. She is described as "the It girl of Canadian comedy ... Dark and delicious is the name of Holmes's game." (the globe and mail).

Jessica Holmes is the newest member of Royal Canadian Air Farce. She's a successful comedian, actress, screenwriter and speaker who has opened for Jerry Seinfeld, Leslie Nielsen and, what the heck, even Dr. Phil. She is a graduate of the radio and television arts program at Ryerson Polytechnic University, where she majored in writing. After graduating, Jessica began performing stand up and comedic monologues at local clubs. She was immediately recognized for her ability to transform herself into dozens of hilarious characters, and in '99 was nominated for the prestigious Tim Sims encouragement award then landed several appearances at the just for laughs international comedy festival in Montreal. She competed in the Comedy Night in Canada stand-up competition and also appeared in the world improv championships.

Soon after, Jessica joined Toronto's legendary Second City, where she co-wrote and performed in "If It's Tuesday, This Must be Belleville", and "The Puck Stops Here." During this time, she began making appearances on TV shows like History Bites, Laughing Matters and starred in her first series entitled Little Big Kid on YTV. She was nominated for several 2000 and 2001 Canadian Comedy Awards for her TV and sketch comedy work.

Holmes co-wrote and starred in the Comedy Network series The Itch, and the CTV comedy/music series: Sonic Temple. She went on to write and star in her own one-hour comedy special for CTV titled Holmes Alone, in which she played a range of hilarious characters such as Candy the happy-go-racist artist, and Patrinka the unsmiling Russian singer. "Holmes is a gifted comic talent, with a range and sensibility that remind me of Tracey Ullman." (The Georgia Straight). For the special, Holmes received a Gemini nomination as well as the Platinum Award at the Houston International Comedy Festival.

The success of Holmes Alone led to the creation of The Holmes Show - a sketch comedy series on CTV & The Comedy Network involving celebrity parodies and edgy satire. Kurt Smeaton and Roman Danylo co-star in the hit series.

Jessica performed in such American projects as Welcome to Mooseport and Zoe Lister-Jones: Wildcard before turning her attention to CBC projects like the sitcom XPM. That was followed by a few guest spots on Royal Canadian Air Farce, where she was invited to become the first "added" cast member since the show began 11 years earlier. You can catch her doing her trademark characters every Friday at 8 pm on CBC.

Recently, Holmes had the fantastic opportunity to open for two of her greatest comedy heroes at separate fundraisers; Leslie Nielsen and Jerry Seinfeld. When not working or spending time with her husband Scott, she continues to promote causes close to her heart like World Society for the Protection of Animals, and Friends of Honduran Children.

MATTE BABEL – MUCH MUSIC VJ and Laurier Grad

Contact: mattba@muchmusic.com

* feature article in Laurier's Campus magazine attached in email

Matte, a Laurier graduate and Torontonion, graces television screens across Canada as a Much Music VJ, co-hosting Much on Demand, The It List and Much 911. His down-to-earth vibe has swayed others to describe him as cool, confident and charismatic.

Background information from Much Music's website:

Cool, confident and charismatic - Matte dropped an infectious urban flava Much couldn't resist. One of the newest editions to the station's on-air roster, this Torontonion simply showed up at MuchMusic World Headquarters and convinced the station's top dogs he was VJ-worthy. In the days that followed Matte continued to impress over a series of grueling on-camera tests. Matte's rap recap: "I cut with precision on a sharp exacto mission. My style was so nice they had to check me out twice." Upbeat and always ready to roll, it's clear this Libra's got his Much groove on.

Matte's got many music-triggered memories. "Tunes from Paul Simon's 'Graceland' album remind me of road trips with my dad. Nas's 'Illmatic' gets me thinking about best friends. And my first love jumps to mind when I crank H-Town's 'Knockin' Da Boots.'" Music's not the only thing raising his heart rate – sports do too. He ably

tears it up on the basketball court and he's even played semi-pro football in Austria. But above all, Matte puts family first. "They constantly inspire me and provide a safety net through tough times. Without family, there's little else."

MATTE COUNTDOWN...

5. Fave Artists: OutKast, Kanye West, Jigga, Notorious B.I.G., Tupac
4. City Switches: Matte's lived in New York City, Atlanta, Scarborough, Milton and now he calls Hamilton home.
3. Sibs: One older brother and a younger brother and sister.
2. Majors: Matte graduated with a double major in communications and sociology from Wilfrid Laurier University.
1. Cool Dude: Need we say more?

OPENING ACTS:

ALEX KOJFMAN

Alex Kojfman graduated from Laurier and did what any sensible person would do with a business degree and co-op experience, he pursued stand up comedy. A graduate of the Second City conservatory program, he performed improv with his troupe Calibre:Gros (with fellow Laurier alumni James Gangl), which had its humble beginnings at Wilf's. Since then they have performed in the Toronto, Chicago and Miami Improv Festivals. Once graduated Alex continued with improv but steadily refocused his energies to stand up comedy. In 2004 he completed the Comedy Writing and Performance program in Toronto and started performing regularly around the city. Alex's comedy is both silly and irreverent. He takes a goofy and friendly approach to figure out the daily absurdities in this world.

JAMES GANGL

James Gangl, a Laurier BBA grad, milks the teat of comedy with his band of merry improv men (and one woman). Using audience suggestions as a launching pad, the troupe creates completely original scenes on the spot, much like a magician pulling a rabbit out of a hat, or a farmer pulling milk out of an udder. Take a trip with a cast of seasoned improvisers that you will recognize from stages such as The Bad Dog Theatre and the Second City in Toronto.