

where the arts meet Fusion

The Daily News Weekend Entertainment Guide

Weekend Top Picks

KFOG KaBoom

Saturday, 4 p.m.
Piers 30 and 32
San Francisco
\$15 advance/\$20 door

The 15th annual KFOG KaBoom outdoor concert will feature acts Collective Soul, Los Lobos and Matt Nathanson, plus the Bay's largest fireworks show, synchronized to a soundtrack of KFOG's "World class rock." In addition to the night's entertainment, concertgoers will enjoy a host of barbecue, seafood and Asian-inspired delights (not to mention several fried Twinkies). For more information, visit www.kfog.com/kaboom.

Cooking Show

May 10, 11, 15-18 (times vary)
SomArts Cultural Center
934 Brannan Street
San Francisco
\$18 advance/\$20 door

What do you get when you mix funny with food? "The Cooking Show Con Karimi & Castro," a delight of the culinary and political appetite as presented by South Bay natives, artists Robert Farid Karimi and John Manal Castro. In partnership with the Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center and Asian American Theater Company, the pair will present Iranian-Guatemalan-Filipino culinary fare with a humorous flair at the SomArts Cultural Center in San Francisco on May 10, 11, and 15-18. For more information, call 415-864-4126.

"Unrestrained Fantasies" solo exhibit

Through June 7
Aicon Gallery
535 Bryan St.
Palo Alto

Indian artist Sanatan Saha presents his abstract "pictorial introspections" in his first solo exhibition with Aicon Gallery. The artist's dreamlike works layer memories and stories with intricate abstract forms of humans, plants and animals. The artist's opening reception will begin today at 6 p.m. For more information, call 650-321-4900.



"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"

Through June 8
San Jose Repertory Theatre
101 Paseo de San Antonio
San Jose
\$24-\$59

San Jose Repertory Theatre presents playwright Jeffrey Hatcher's contemporary adaptation of the classic tale of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Employing the use of four actors to portray Mr. Hyde, this new re-telling casts Hyde, as well as Jekyll, in a new light, exploring the facets of good and evil in each personality. For more information, visit www.sjrep.com.

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Enter the 'World of Jewtopia'

Comedic duo reintroduce humor of their off-Broadway hit

By Paul Freeman
Daily News Entertainment Writer

Two standup comics, Sam Wolfson and Bryan Fogel, who had previously struggled to establish separate careers, turned a 10-minute scene into a show business empire.

In Los Angeles, the pair transformed their much-lauded staged sketch into a full theatrical production. "We didn't know if we had a whole play there," Wolfson said. "But it just kept going when we started writing about our crazy families."

Drawing on their backgrounds, the pair wrote "Jewtopia." "We take the stereotypes and try to put a spin on it," Wolfson said. "In the play, Bryan plays a gentile who loves Jewish women, because they make all his decisions. Who doesn't want someone to make all your decisions for you on a daily basis — tell you what to wear, who your friends are and things like that?"

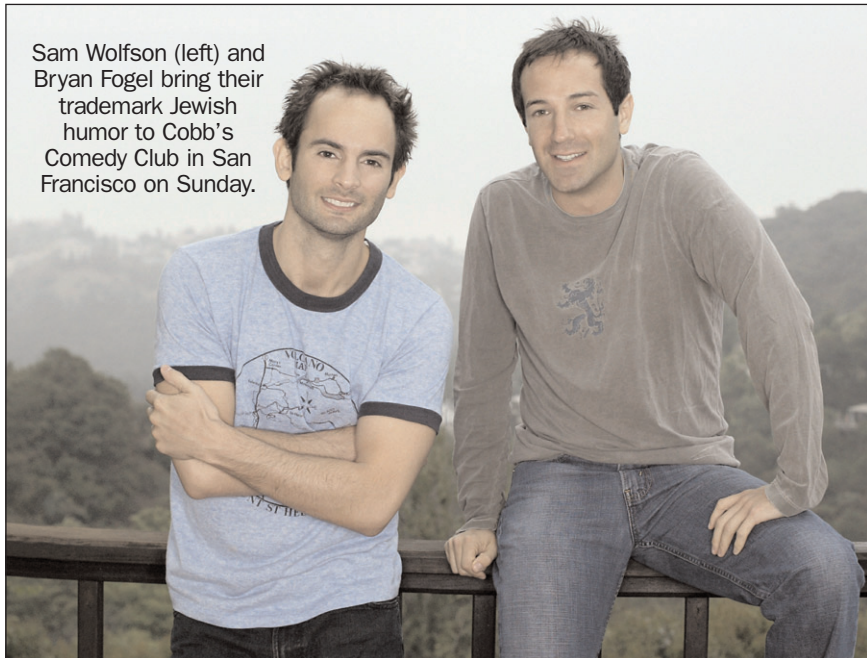
After polishing the work, they reached a crossroads. "With both of our parents, it was like, 'Gee, if this doesn't work out, it might be time to think about a new career.' So we made the decision to rack our credit cards, ask our parents for loans and just put this play up on our own. Sort of a do-or-die situation, and thank God it all worked out."

A rare gem

After a smash run in Los Angeles, "Jewtopia" became off-Broadway's longest running hit. "Off-Broadway shows never recoup their money, so we're lumped in with Blue Man Group and 'Stomp' as the three shows that lasted," he said.

Road companies have also struck gold. There's a production in Sarasota, Fla., that just wrapped and another opening in Atlanta soon, both mounted without Fogel and Wolfson. "Having our doppelgangers in it is a bit bizarre. But it's fun, too."

Sam Wolfson (left) and Bryan Fogel bring their trademark Jewish humor to Cobb's Comedy Club in San Francisco on Sunday.



Courtesy photo

Obviously, the play's popularity extends beyond the Jewish community. "It's weird," Wolfson said, "we do get mixed crowds. Everybody gets a kick out

Sundays," Wolfson said, referencing Billy Crystal's autobiographical stage hit. "It deals with our families, as well as a history of Judaism, told in our crazy, warped way."

There's plenty of spontaneity in this creation. "It's very interactive. It's like the Jewish Apollo," Wolfson said. "As soon as you let a Jewish crowd know that they're free to shout out whatever they want, and they're actually involved in a show, they're like a third character."

"It's almost a variety show. We've got this huge, multimedia screen, kind of like 'An Inconvenient Truth.' We do standup, read transcripts of phone conversations with our moms. It's got a ton of stuff."

Though there's an edge to the comedy, audiences don't find it offensive. "If you can't laugh at this kind of stuff, you're probably not laughing at 'Seinfeld,' 'The Producers' or 'Curb Your Enthusiasm.' Every now and then, you'll get an e-mail saying that you're the devil. But that's a rare thing."

Comedic artists such as Fogel and Wolfson, Larry David and Sacha Baron Cohen are yanking Jewish humor into a new age. "It's hipper than this kind of stuff usually is, compared to a Jackie Mason or a Neil Simon," he said. "It's a Gen X perspective. It's the attitude that changes, the themes have always been self-deprecating."

Though Fogel was raised a modern Orthodox Jew in Denver, and Wolfson a Reform Jew in Jacksonville, Fla., they have similar comic sensibilities.

"At our shows, we've had people from Israel, Mexico and Russia. And they all

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'Everybody's family is nuts. Everybody can relate to the pressure to date within your own culture. So you really don't have to be Jewish to like "Jewtopia."

— Sam Wolfson, co-creator of "Jewtopia"

of peeking inside another person's experience, whether it's watching 'My Big Fat Greek Wedding' or Chris Rock.

"Everybody's family is nuts. Everybody can relate to the pressure to date within your own culture. So you really don't have to be Jewish to like 'Jewtopia.' But if you are Jewish, you'll probably like it a little bit more."

The success of the play spawned a hilarious coffee table book, "Jewtopia: The Chosen Book for the Chosen People." Topics include Jewish conspiracy theories, what Jews see when they look under the hood of a car, unusual bar mitzvah themes and previously unknown aspects of that most famous of Jews, Jesus.

Second time around

Now the pair is presenting "World of Jewtopia," a two-man show that they will perform on Mother's Day at Cobb's Comedy Club. "It's sort of like our '700



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