

See The Comedy Zone in its new Asheville home

Hayley Benton

Special to Scene

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The theater lights dim, a spotlight blinks on, and golden light is cast across a lone microphone at center stage. The evening's entertainer arrives, and the hushed crowd erupts into laughter that echoes throughout the intimate venue. Though these are nationally renowned, touring comedians, this isn't a one-off event: It's The Comedy Zone in its new Asheville home at the Wortham Center for the Performing Arts.

For four weekends this season, downtown Asheville is getting its very own comedy club, featuring a touring selection of some of the hottest stand-up comedians today — and it all begins Friday and Saturday, Oct. 13 and 14.

After a popular run at the venue last season, the nation's largest comedy collective is back, bringing top-notch comedians as seen in specials on Comedy Central, HBO Comedy, Netflix, Hulu and more. With a new headliner and opening act each weekend, The Comedy Zone is constantly refreshing its selection of witty one-liners, preposterous punchlines and hysterical anecdotes to keep locals laughing all night — and all year — long.

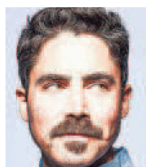
The Comedy Zone was founded in 1986 to capitalize on the growing stand-up movement of the time. "Cable TV was just getting started, and stand-up was finally being featured on TV other than The Tonight Show," said Comedy Zone owner and managing partner Brian Heffron. With so much momentum behind comedy, "we also wanted to bring world-class comedy to small and mid-size markets that might not be able



Outz



Larrabee



Smith



Byars

IF YOU GO

What: The Comedy Zone with headliner Leonard Outz.

When: 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 13 and 14

Where: Wortham Center for the Performing Arts, 18 Biltmore Ave., downtown Asheville.

Tickets: \$28 at worthamarts.org.

to support a full-time comedy club."

By the mid-90s, The Comedy Zone was one of the largest networks of comedians in the country — and, today, the collective continues to fill venues nationwide, including at its own dedicated, branded clubs from Pennsylvania to Florida.

At the Wortham Center's comedy club, however, guests are treated to more than just a show. Drop in, hang out, enjoy drink and snack specials — with treats from Asheville Charcuterie Company, \$5 local drafts and 20% off bottles of wine, just for the occasion — and get ready to laugh out loud in the venue's intimate Tina McGuire Theatre.

"Bring a date. Plan a girls' night out. Come see us in October — and then again in December, January or February. We really

want people to know that the Wortham Center is *the* place to find comedy in Asheville," said Rae Geoffrey, managing director of the Wortham Center.

Each weekend brings a new headliner and opening act to the downtown venue, kicking off with the hilarious Leonard Outz on Oct. 13 and 14, continuing with Joel Byars on Dec. 1 and 2 and Lace Larrabee on Jan. 19 and 20, and wrapping for the season with Doug Smith on Feb. 23 and 24.

"You might not know their names, but these are some of the top comedians in the country," Heffron said. "Bigger name doesn't mean bigger laughs — and we all need a good laugh from time to time. No matter your background, demographic or income level: Everyone loves to laugh. It's a unifying activity. So give us a try, and let us show you some great entertainment."

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Fall Foods

As we move from fall into winter and cooler temperatures it's always fun to start adding more seasonal foods and dishes to our meals.

Fall is the time for winter squash. Look for winter squash in your Ingles

produce section like Acorn, Butternut, Delicata and Kabocha. These can be stuffed and baked or roasted or peeled and cooked or boiled for mashed dishes, soups and stews. *(Cooking Tip: sometimes these winter squash are hard to cut. Often I'll pierce the skin a few times with a fork and microwave for 3-5 minutes until the skin is soft so they're easier to cut. You can also often find pre-cut winter squash like Butternut in the Ingles PRODUCE department).*

Fall is also APPLE season in your Ingles PRODUCE department. Check out all the different varieties of apples including locally grown apples. Add sliced or chopped apples to a salad or sandwich for a crunch and some sweetness. Put chopped apples into oatmeal while you're cooking it. Make apple pies, crisps, crumbles and cobblers. Use apples to make apple sauce or apple butter in your crockpot or make a sweet and spicy apple salsa that's perfect to top pork loin or chicken. You can also slice whole apples thinly and toss with cinnamon and sugar or a sugar-Splendid(sucralose) blend and cook on a low heat oven 150-170 degrees for 3-4 hours until crispy for apple chips.



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