



With the gradually optimized pandemic restrictions this year, we put the first North American tour for Chinese stand-up comedy high up on our agenda as a means of letting the world know more about Chinese young people and comedy.

He Xiaoxi

Co-founder and CEO of Xiaoguo Comedy

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All tickets for the North American tour were snapped up quickly by overseas Chinese as well as foreigners keen on Chinese culture.

“Many enthusiasts arrived at theaters a couple of hours before the show,” said Liang Jiangang, an official from Xiaoguo Comedy. “Some people thought it was a perfect and joyous way to celebrate the Lunar New Year with family and friends.”

In 2022, Xiaoguo Comedy set up its YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter accounts to communicate with global stand-up show fans, attracting more than 120,000 followers in just over half a year and

feeling the love and passion of overseas fans. In the future, the troupe hopes to tour Europe and other parts of the world to share the humor, joy and cultural charm of China.

In the past few years, stand-up comedy has gradually become one of the most popular forms of comedy among China’s youngsters, mainly those under 35 years of age. The new form is now a thriving alternative to the country’s traditional comedic art forms of crosstalk and skits and has boosted the comedy culture with diversity and creativity.

Different from the puns and poetry which are widely incorporated into a traditional crosstalk show, stand-up comedy is focused on reality and issues closely related to audiences’ lives.



Members of the audience interact with the comedians during the show.

A few high-quality Chinese variety shows of the genre such as “Stand-up Comedy” and “Rock & Roast” have emerged on streaming websites and helped nurture a massive fan base. The flourishing of comedy clubs in big cities and producers’ innovative experiments with different formats and performing styles have also propelled the development of the entertainment genre in China.

In an act of about five to 10 minutes, Chinese comedians share their opinions and insights into topics like marriage, workplace and varied relationships in a satirical or straightforward way.

To shorten the psychological distance with the audience, they usually seem to tell stories of their own. They always have a good handling of rhythm, timing and multiple manners on stage to make people laugh.

Their performances help to ease the pressure and anxiety of people struggling to settle down in big cities or facing work dilemmas. Approaches for some typical life problems are also offered.

Meanwhile, Chinese stand-up comedy never stops its exploration of untapped potential at the grassroots level. Many female comedians are also shining on the stage with their distinctive charm.

Producers of the hit variety show “Stand-up Comedy,”



Audiences burst into fits of laughter.

a joint effort of Xiaoguo and Tencent, believe that everyone has the ability to be a stand-up comedian for at least five minutes. The amazing performances of people from all walks of life, such as special police and firefighters, in the show have changed people’s stereotypes about comedy.

Jane Sun, a local primary school teacher, said that she is a big fan of stand-up comedy thanks to the influence of variety shows. Some jokes, in her opinion, are superb with rich cultural metaphors and heritage.

“Many stand-up comedians are amiable ordinary people who are not far from our lives,” Sun added. “Their charm on stage has also encouraged me to present my own stand-up comedy act about my students’

school performances at the parents’ meeting. It was well-received. I think everyone can have a try at stand-up comedy. That’s the appeal of the art form.”

Theater expert Chen Daming from the Shanghai Dramatists Association noted that the art form has a low threshold as it almost has no requirement for performer’s appearance, stature and singing skills except for eloquence and a sense of humor. Stage settings for such shows are also simple and casual.

“It is so good to see more and more intellectuals in China, including college students and white-collar workers, standing on stage with confidence and desire to express their views and thoughts in vivid and creative ways,” Chen said.



The show attracted both overseas Chinese people and foreigners keen on Chinese culture.