

# Naturally Funny Guy

Ryan Stiles on "A Night of Improv"

**"Y**ou're not really a clown if you're not funny, unless you're a sad clown."

Known for having the best dressed feet in improvisational comedy (OK, he also did a few TV shows like *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* and *The Drew Carey Show*), comic showoff Ryan Stiles and his hand-picked pack of wild comedians return to the Hult Center Saturday for "A Night of Improv."

Raised as a border baby (born in Seattle and raised in Vancouver, British Columbia), Stiles recently founded the Upfront Theatre and Improv School in Bellingham, Wash., where he now lives. Stiles takes his celebrity in small doses, popping up in *Two and a Half Men* or *Reno 911!* and performing at the Upfront Theatre. He also tours "A Night of Improv" with his pals Greg Proops, Jeff Davis and Chip Esten.

Stiles does astounding charity work, staging benefits for injured children



and visiting hospitals with other stars and improv students. "That's the kind of stuff you want to do," he says. "But then you also get, you know, 'It's my husband's 40th birthday — can you come and do something?'"

"I could care less whether I'm in television or film again, but I need to get on stage," Stiles says. "I never really got into it for the fame anyway. I was nominated for an Emmy one year, and I never even went. ... I don't want to do a regular series where I'd have to be down there all the time. My family lives up here, so I saw my kids one week of every month for ten years. So I kind of wanted to stay up here."

Stiles, 48, quit high school to do standup, then joined Second City in Toronto to do improv in 1986. "I went down with a company that moved to L.A. and it took off from there."

"I guess I'm a naturally funny guy," he says. "I think that's why I got kicked out of school, too. I got kicked out of class, but I was always the favorite of every teacher. They'd be, like, 'I'm so sorry I have to kick you out, but I do.'"

His touring cast "is a really tight group," Stiles says. "Everybody's different, and we really work well together."

"We used to have Drew Carey and Kathy Kinney [*The Drew Carey Show's* Mimi Bobeck], and all those people, so we usually had nine to 10 people on tour. We found what happened there is, say there were 12 games in the show, I would end up doing four. But, with a four-guy group, we're on all the time. It keeps the energy going because we're not sitting on the side all the time. And plus, we wanted to make it funny. That's why we don't have Drew with us." **EW**

**A Night of Improv • 7:30 pm Saturday, June 16 • Hult Center • \$27-\$37**

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