

Book 'em, Danylo! Calgary's Roman Danylo draws raves for David Caruso impersonation

BY ERIC VOLMERS, CALGARY HERALD MAY 3, 2011



Courtesy, Roman Danylo Calgary native Roman Danylo as David Caruso in CSI: Calgary.

Given that he is a comedian, it's not altogether clear whether Roman Danylo is being sincere when he expresses an admiration for David Caruso, the carrot-topped star of CSI: Miami who tends to draw mixed reviews for his unusually mannered acting style.

Danylo, a Calgary native and Loose Moose Theatre alumni, has become known for his bang-on impersonation of the actor, spoofing Caruso's slouching Horatio Caine character in a series of sketches on CTV's now defunct Comedy Inc. and earning 250,000 hits on YouTube for his David Caruso School of Acting segment. But the soft-spoken comedian insists he spoofs with love.

"I love that acting style, where the guy just sort of goes for it," Danylo says in an interview from his home in Vancouver. "He's a lot like William Shatner to me. They are kind of over-the-top with their acting style, with the strange pauses and inflections on words like 'the' that you wouldn't expect. And they're ultimate heroes, they never make a mistake. It's just an extreme. I just admire it. There's no self-consciousness at all."

So does that mean Danylo would like to meet Mr. Caruso in person one day? "Oh no no," he says quickly. "That would be awkward."

Nevertheless, Danylo's Caruso will be making hometown appearances Friday and Saturday when the comedian returns to Calgary for two comedy shows at his old stomping grounds.

CSI: Calgary finds Horatio pausing and slouching his way through a Cowtown mystery that will be specifically designed for a Loose Moose crowd.

The show — that also features comedians Diana Frances and Nathan Clark — is a half-and-half mix of improv and sketch comedy, harkening back to Danylo's salad days as a young Loose Moose improv performer in the late 1980s.

"It's essentially a sketch-comedy revue," Danylo says. "So it's some of the best sketches from Comedy Inc. and some new sketches and some recurring characters of that show. Plus, it's got the through line of the title sketch, which is a parody of CSI: Miami that can only be set in Calgary. That will run through the entire show, so we'll keep revisiting that and finding out more clues."

Danylo has often taken the CSI theme on the road, fashioning each show to fit whatever city he is in.

Often with the help of cab drivers, he'll determine the town's seediest bar, most dangerous area and notable personalities and weave them into the plot line.

This is much easier, of course, when he is in a town that he grew up in. Danylo was a 17-year-old Sir Winston Churchill High School student when he discovered Loose Moose, a pioneering improv troupe that also served as a comedy springboard for Kids in the Hall's Bruce McCulloch and Mark McKinney and Fubar's Dave Lawrence, Paul Spence and Terra Hazelton and numerous others.

Danylo staged a TheatreSports event at his high school, unaware that Loose Moose actually owned the copyright on the format and name. But they were characteristically supportive and Danylo started to perform with the troupe, staying until 1991 when he headed to the greener comedy pastures of Vancouver.

Danylo appeared on various homegrown TV shows, including Corner Gas, Just for Laughs and Made in Canada. He was a cast member of Comedy Inc. for its five-season run, while continuing to hone his standup craft.

But the comedy circuit is not always the most comfortable terrain for touring, which led him to design a more ambitious theatre show.

"Standup comedians are thrown into these horrible environments," he says. "I've shown up at shows where they didn't have any microphones. I showed up at one show where they didn't have any lighting so they just turned up the heat lamp from the buffet. They will say 'You can do it in the corner of the room. You can do it outside, it's raining. Don't worry about it.'"

"So I said 'I've got to go do some shows.' The holy grail of environments for comedians is a nice soft-seat theatre. That's when I started doing those tours and some solo standup and improv tours. And I thought a really good idea for a show would be to make it about the small-town specifically and do a parody of the CSI thing."

Spotlight

CSI: Calgary with Roman Danylo, Diana Frances and Nathan Clark plays the Loose Moose Theatre Friday and Saturday. Tickets, \$25, at 403-265-5682.