



Improv & Storytelling Offerings

We love **improv**.

We love **storytelling**.

We love **conversations**.

And we believe that we can use any of the above to spark important discussions, build long-lasting partnerships, and serve communities all across the globe—and laugh while doing it.

This can be a simple show, it can be a multi-day workshops series, it can be both!

What does your community need? Let's chat, we'd love to help.

Chris, Eric, and Leon
Broke Gravy

01 Oh, Hey!

02 Made for you.

Who is Broke Gravy?





Broke Gravy

Portland's Dopest Improv Comedy

We use improv comedy and storytelling to discover truth between the blurry lines of the daily grind.

As three black men living in America, we utilize our unique voices to spark thoughtful conversations on and off comedy stages.

Through an open and honest dialogue, we exchange our experiences with those of our audience—exploring deeper perspectives on comedy, relationships, and humanity.

A man with a beard and mustache is laughing heartily, wearing a white short-sleeved button-down shirt. He is standing in front of a wall made of horizontal wooden planks. His hands are clasped in front of him. The text "Also, we're funny AF." is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

Also, we're funny AF.

“Portland's nationally
lauded improv group
Broke Gravy.

Willamette Week ¹

Featured performances include:

Stumptown Improv Festival, Portland, OR
Seattle Festival of Improv, Seattle, WA
Improvaganza, Edmonton, AB
Black & Funny Improv Festival, Minneapolis, MN
COMBUSTIONfestival, Toronto, ON
Ocean State Improv Festival, Wakefield, RI
Vancouver International Improv Festival, Vancouver, BC

Improv Festival of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH
The Westside Comedy Festival, Santa Monica, CA
Out of Bounds Comedy Festival, Austin, TX
Boston Improv Festival, Cambridge, MA
Just For Laughs Northwest, Vancouver, BC
NW Black Comedy Festival, Portland, OR
Washington State Students of Color Conference, Yakima, WA

Chris Williams East Lansing, MI



A shy kid born and raised in Michigan, Chris eventually gave voice to his imagination—and has spent the last 15 years living and playing in Portland, Oregon. The beauty of the Pacific Northwest may have won his heart but it's his community of amazing people that keeps him there. Using his background in Sociology, Psychology, and a Master's in Conflict Resolution, he supports the Portland Public School District and their mission of equity and student achievement. Chris loves helping students and families navigate through the world of public education.

Right after graduating from Colorado College, Chris started his improv journey in Los Angeles and for the past twenty plus years has been honing those skills and teaching others along the way. He's a proud member of the internationally recognized improv trio Broke Gravy. He's the founder and producer of Front Porch Sessions, a local storytelling show that focuses on giving voice to marginalized communities. He is board president of Kickstand Comedy Theater, a non-profit theater company that's goal is breaking down the barriers people have to seeing and performing art. Chris can also be seen telling true stories on stages all over Portland.

Chris has developed and leads storytelling workshops for performers and non-performers because he believes in helping people tell their stories—and giving the community perspectives they might not normally be exposed to. He wants to eliminate the isolation and fear people have from feeling disconnected from the community. Chris has always believed two things: cheesecake with graham cracker crust is the perfect food and everyone has at least one great story inside of them.

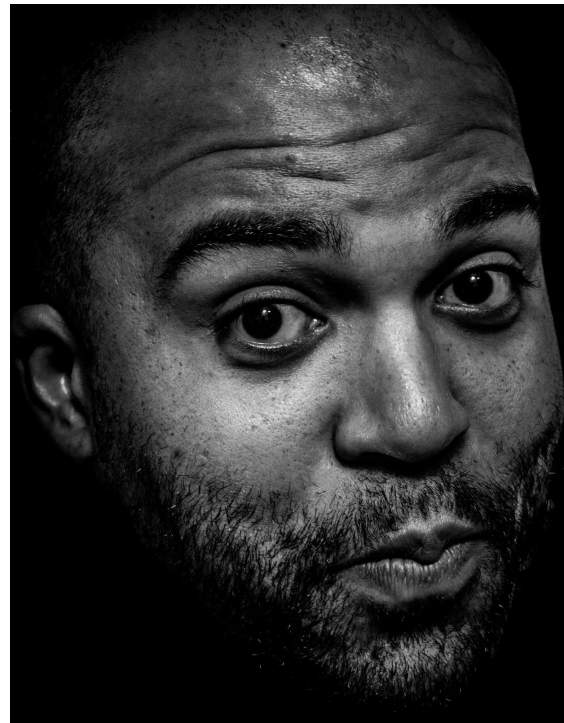
The first time Eric was exposed to improv was in high school—not as a performer, but a spectator of Central High School’s student team. He was mesmerized by what they did on stage, but when his father asked if he’d ever be interested in something like that, Eric couldn’t imagine it.

A three-sport athlete and honor student, he found ways to weave creativity into his school work, on the playing field, and in his close relationships, but the vulnerability that theater required frightened him. Cut to five years later and a little encouragement from his family, there he stood performing in front of his college classmates for the first time.

The shy but inquisitive type, quick-tongued when not biting it, improv helped turn a quiet child into the ultimate version of himself. Heart-on-sleeve, confident, forgiving, empathic—all these traits and more came floating to the surface and he’s never looked back.

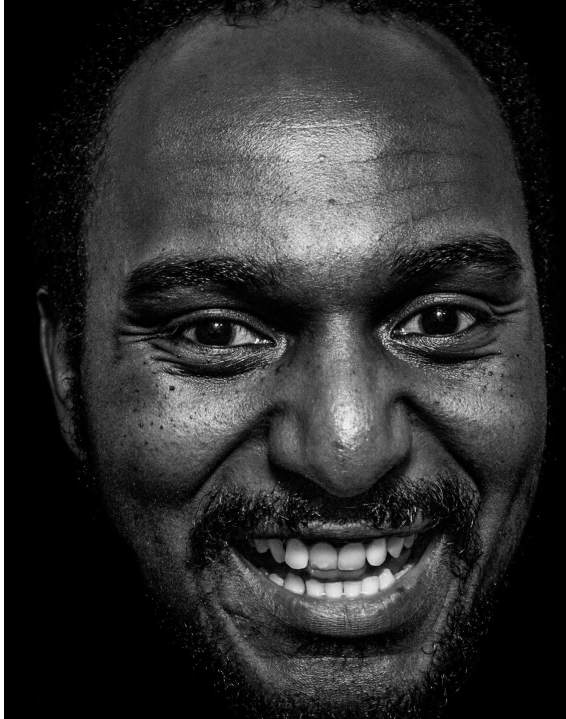
Now a creative copywriter, a member of Kickstand Comedy Theater’s leadership team, an improv teacher and coach, a brother, a son, an over-excited father-to-be. Eric relishes the chance to jump without a net—finding his footing on the way and connecting with the other jumpers looking to spark something true.

Eric Simons *Saint Paul, MN*



Leon Anderson

Ft. Lauderdale, FL



Leon Anderson has lived in all corners of the US; but having been raised in Fort Lauderdale, Florida he still considers himself something of a beach kid -- social, laid back and consistently in the moment. He left home and moved to Los Angeles for college, and this is where his love of speech and debate found its home in the world of improv comedy.

Leon has been performing improv since 2003 in various forms, and after completing his bachelors and masters degrees in engineering from the University of Southern California, he solidified his training at the Second City Conservatory in Hollywood, CA. He acts on stage and on screen, and he is proud to share his animated and physical style with his fellow members of Broke Gravy.

An engineer and product manager, Leon is creative and visionary. He owns a true passion for people, connection, and leadership. Leon consistently uses his improv training to boost his professional skills and in turn helps other professionals discover the joys and lessons of improvisation, through workshops, conversation and mentorship.

Leon doesn't always talk about himself in the third person, so if you want to learn more find him, buy him a drink, and ask whatever you want.

What do we do?

TRUTH



STORY



IMPROV

Storytelling

- Partnering with local performers and organizations to share their truth.
- Focus on working with historically underrepresented communities (people of color, women, people who aren't defined by a binary gender, LGBTQIA+, and more).
- We don't ask anyone to do anything we wouldn't do—so we share personal stories, both on- and off-stage.

Improvisation

- We create stories that engage and connect with audiences from diverse backgrounds—from truth to stage.
- Deconstruct information to explore it from new and evolving perspectives.
- Produce, perform, and curate shows for audiences of any size and any type.
- We want you to have as much fun in the audience as we are having on stage. And there is nowhere we'd rather be.

“ Sit back as Broke
Gravy takes those
tales and turns
them into improv
magic.

*Portland Mercury*²



What's that secret sauce?

RECIPE

— *made with love* —

TITLE: Good Gravy

SERVES: _____ PREP TIME: _____ COOK TIME: _____

INGREDIENTS:

respect

relationships

curiosity

joy

vulnerability

truth

from the kitchen of: _____



“ An imaginative, hilarious trio focused on physicality and unique characters.... This group is hard to predict but always puts on a wonderful show.

*Portland Mercury*³

01 Oh Hey!

02 Made for you.

We believe:

“ Through story and improvisation, we as individuals can express experiences that are uniquely our own—and do so within old and new communities that are safe, creative and productive.

How we do it:

- We leverage your intimate knowledge of your community to craft workshops and shows tailored to your current needs.
- We will highlight and elevate the voices of your communities, especially the historically voiceless.
- We create cross-generational opportunities to connect and learn from each other through deconstruction of ideas, performance, and respectful dialogue.



Shows customized for you.

Remix Your Life [30 mins - 1.5 hours]

Basic Format:

We'll interview a member (or two) in the audience. Using the information, emotions, and overall vibe of the conversation, we create snapshots of a world that isn't a recreation of what has already happened, but a mosaic of life's hills, valleys, and all the flavor in-between.

Featured Guests:

This format features members of our audience... We know it may sound scary, but don't worry you're in great hands. We value those who have taken the time to come to our show, and believe in treating them with the utmost respect and courtesy.

Whatchu Wanna Know [30 mins - 1.5 hours]

Basic Format:

The flip side of “Remix...” This is your opportunity to get to know the three members of Broke Gravy more intimately. A Q&A session where your community can (respectfully) ask us anything—and we’ll be 100% candid. From our answers, we’ll weave together a tapestry of scenes that range from the absurd to the absurdly authentic. Bring your top-shelf questions, we don’t have time for our favorite colors (we all love green anyway).

The Barbershop [1 - 2 hours]

Basic Format:

Our most inclusive format, a free-flowing discussion between us and the community.

Topics can be predetermined, or we can simply see where the day takes us. Scenes can erupt at any point and conversations can twist and turn unexpectedly. All we ask is for your vulnerability, we'll bring ours.

Potential Guests:

Respected members of your community, such as:

- Local celebrities / community leaders
- Writers
- Athletes
- Politicians
- Educators

Basically anybody who has a point of view and is ready to open up about it.

Bring Your Truth [1 - 2 hours]

Basic Format:

This storytelling show includes members of the community doing short (3-7 minutes) stories around a common theme. There are options to also have us tell stories or even to have people volunteer to speak off-the-cuff and on-the-spot.

We believe story comes in many forms. Prose to poetry, monologue and readings to movement and visual art.

Potential Guests:

- Storytellers
- Poets
- Dancers
- Musicians
- Community Elders
- Children learning the art of story

Workshops curated for you.

Your Very Own Story [2 - 3 hours]

Personal Storytelling

A story is not a rant or a sermon, nor a stand-up set or a Ted Talk. A story is an invitation. It's a verbal meal meant to be shared, but sometimes it feels like the same perspectives are being served over and over again. We'll help you unlock your individual style and complexity to life through story. We have a variety of exercises and techniques to support the way you speak, your history, your background, and how you see the world. Through exploration and vulnerability we will help you find your truth and how to bring your true voice to the stage.

Intended Audience:

- Humans
- Actors
- Writers

Lessons Learned:

- Story analysis
- Public speaking
- Self exploration

Not Always Black and White [2 - 3 hours]

Working from your personal story

News Flash! Improv is not known for its diversity. But that's all changing, and the tools they teach you have applications in and outside of the theater. As we work to represent more of our global tapestry, let's work to explore different perspectives. We each carry with us a unique story and history—and through this workshop, we'll tap into what makes us different in order to create rich, multi-dimensional characters. Let's be truthfully influenced by our current environment and flavored by our culture, heritage, geography, and past. What connects us is often surprising.

Intended Audience:

- Communication-heavy professions
- Storytellers, improvisers and actors
- Cross generational experiences

Lessons Learned:

- Communication and connection
- Listening and abstracting themes
- Honesty and vulnerability
- Monologues

The 101 [2 - 3 hours]

Improv basics

Whatever our medium, we all seek to engage our audience in a story. Why not make it a story that's never been created? We'll touch on the basic fundamentals of improv comedy and storytelling: communication, character, relationship, and environment. Practice thinking on your feet, listing with purpose, and collaborating to create something together that couldn't be made on your own.

Intended Audience:

- Business teams
- Beginner improvisers and actors
- Groups and organizations of all ages

Lessons Learned:

- Agreement and communication
- Character, relationship and environment
- Crafting a scene

Bring Your Backpack [2 - 3 hours]

Object and space work

Whether you call it mime, space work, object work or something completely different -- it makes a world of difference in a scene. People are designed to understand and connect with their physical reality. Interaction crosses language and culture barriers, and allows the performer to share an experience words cannot express.

In this workshop will work solo, in pairs and together as groups to translate our everyday experiences with physical objects into your work. Boost the reality of your object work and engage with each other in a shared reality.

Intended Audience:

- Cross generational experiences
- Creative professionals, artists, and writers
- Stage and improv actors

Lessons Learned:

- Focus and attention to detail
- Relationship to environment
- Object permanence

i2i (Improv to...) Series [8 total hours]

Practical application of improvisation

i2i is a three part series that harnesses the tools and vocabulary of improv comedy, and applies them to your business team. The series is broken down into three parts that provide value for all levels of your organization. These can occur on one long day; however, it is recommended over multiple days to allow time for it to sink in.

Part 1: Improv to Innovation (2 hour)

This segment uses the tools and vocabulary of improv comedy to help professionals maximize output and creative problem solving at all stages of the product life cycle.

Part 2: Improv to Inspiration (2 hour)

Presentation skills are vitally important throughout all levels of any organization. This segment uses the tools and vocabulary of improv comedy to help craft world class inspirational presentations and demonstrations.

Part 3: Improv to... Improv (4 hours)

This is the really fun part. An Improv 101 workshop led by skilled and experienced improvisers. This segment is on your feet, hands on, and active. And is both a mental and interpersonal work out. As we exercise the tools and vocabulary of improv in a safe and supportive environment.

These offerings are simply a jumping off point. We'd love to talk more about how we can work together to best support your community and it's needs. We're always excited to see how we can use a little Broke Gravy magic to spark vital discussions.

Thanks!



Contact:

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Appendix

1. Willamette Week — Portland, OR — Alternative Weekly Newspaper
bit.ly/BrokeGravy1
2. Portland Mercury — Portland, OR — Alternative Bi-Weekly Newspaper
bit.ly/BrokeGravy2
3. Portland Mercury — Portland, OR — Alternative Bi-Weekly Newspaper
bit.ly/BrokeGravy3



