

Next in line

Pardis Parker is poised to join the ranks of Canadian comics who made it big south of the border

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There are two things that Canadians are exceptionally good at: Hockey and comedy.

Our expertise at hockey is a given, it's cold most of the year and either we stay inside getting on each other's last nerve, or we go out and skate.

But why we create so many great comedians, who knows? Maybe skating in the freezing cold is, after all, hilarious?

SCTV, in the 1970s, helped create John Candy, Eugene Levy, Martin Short, Andrea Martin, Catherine O'Hara, Rick Moranis and Lorne Michaels. Then came Dan Aykroyd, Dave Thomas, Mike Myers, all the guys from The Kids in the Hall, Howie Mandel, Russell Peters-- and Jim Carrey.

Percentage wise for our tiny populated country, that's a lot of funniness.

Now there is another, brand new guy who could be coming into play.

He really has come out of left field -- or, to be exact, the east field of Halifax, N.S.

His name is Pardis Parker and you'll see him for the first time this month on TV on CBC, which is airing a special from the Halifax Comedy Festival, which features Parker and a few others.

Parker, who doesn't want to divulge his age for fear of being pigeon-holed, is a handsome late 20-something of Afghan heritage, who spent his early youth toiling at McGill University in Montreal getting a computer-science degree.

He didn't like it much. "What I liked was telling jokes," he says.

Nonetheless, he returned to Halifax and opened up his own health-food business. By day, he hawked vitamins. By night, he "came alive" by playing the local standup-comedy circuit.

"If it's not what you love, it becomes taxing," he said. Finally, he quit the health-food business and with his savings came to Los Angeles to perform standup as Jim Carrey, famously discovered during a routine at The Comedy Store in Los Angeles, did before him.

And, just like that, Parker was doing his act at another standup venue, The Improv, a few months back, when, wouldn't you know it, a

producer from CBS approached him after the show.

After looking at more than 3,000 acts, the producer selected Parker to perform with 12 other comedians in the CBS Comedy Showcase at the end of January.

The showcase is an industry event where 700 TV execs choose who they want for upcoming TV shows and movies.

"It's an incredible opportunity," says Parker. "We're being introduced as the 'fresh faces of Hollywood'. They were obviously in need of an incredibly good-looking brown guy and took me."

Stay tuned to Parker's career and catch some of his current acts on pardisparker.com; his timing, his acts (which he writes himself) and expressions are hilarious. But, remember, you heard it here first.

SO THERE WAS THIS SKUNK PASSING BY ...Another Canadian comic great, Tom Green, was walking into a friend's birthday party at Club Lingerie in Hollywood, when a skunk happens by the sidewalk and tries to enter as well.

A club-goer said Green, 38, shook his finger at the smelly rodent and said: "Are you sure you have an invitation?"

Green kicks off his World Standup Comedy Tour in Edmonton on Jan. 7 at the Comic Strip.

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