

Palestine Comedy Club

2025 | 93mins | Subtitles

Director: Alaa Aliabdallah

In 2018, Alaa Shehada, a man from Jenin refugee camp (which the city in Palestine referred to as 'the Wasps' Nest') knew exactly what Palestine was in want of, something the country had never seen before in any of its long history: a stand-up comedy circuit. Thus came the founding of the Palestine Comedy Club. Along with British co-founders Charlotte Knowles (Producer) and Sam Beale (Artistic Director), they sought out performers from all over the West Bank as well as Israel to join them on an unprecedented journey: a comedy tour fraught with checkpoints, music, sceptical audiences, and finally an invitation to London.

This documentary (filmed largely in 2022-2023) takes the audience with the Palestine Comedy Club right into their van as they try to unite their people who have been fragmented by occupation. Travelling between Haifa, Ramallah, Jenin, Nablus, Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights, we learn about their ways, their stereotypes, their love, their religion, and how, with just the right joke, it can all be turned into laughter. Shehada notes, 'As a country, we don't really know each other that well', and this is exactly what he aims to rectify.

The comedians speak about their homes as each is visited, however, the absence of Gaza looms over the group. Despite receiving numerous requests, there is no stop there on the tour, as logistical, legal, and very real physical barriers keep any potential comedians apart.

Finally, the group begins to gain international recognition and is invited to London where some of the comedians are tasked with performing in English for the very first time. As events continue to unfold back home, they must ask themselves, is it still okay to laugh?

'Immediately I realised - comedy had the opportunity to do something that journalism was always gonna struggle to do.'

- Charlotte Knowles

Excellent

Fair

Poor



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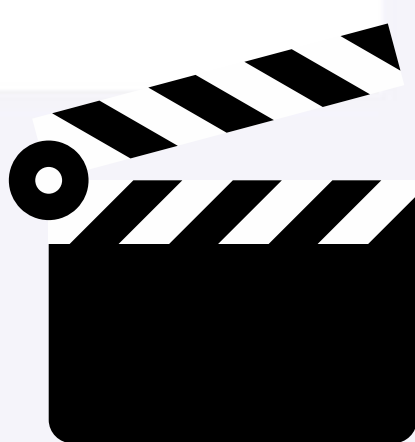
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Did You Know?

- Alaa Shehada will be performing his next show ‘The Horse of Jenin’ at the Bush Theatre in London from 20 November - 20 December.
- In order to pass through checkpoints to get to shows, the group sometimes had to pretend that they had back problems so that they could be allowed through to see a doctor.
- The Freedom Theatre in Jenin, where Alaa Shehada started out, was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2024.

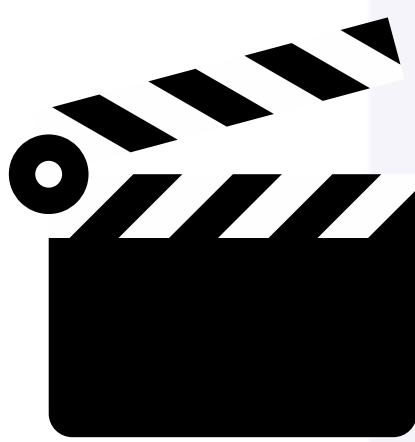
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