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**comedy DAILY**  
**Comedy: the Israeli-Palestinian Comedy Tour, May 29 @ Massey Hall**  
 June 1st, 2007

**Sean Davidson**  
 Comments [0]

Hey folks, ever notice that the word "Lebanese" sort of looks like "lesbian"? Or that the swarthy and bearded have had a hard time getting through airport security for the last, oh, almost six years? Or how about the way they drive in Haifa? Huh? Huh?

The disappointing thing about the Israeli-Palestinian Comedy Tour — despite its deliciously button-pushing premise — was that it played out so very plainly during its one-night only at Roy Thomson Hall on Tuesday, delivering mostly by-now familiar bits about bagels, self-loathing and only slightly reworded ol' stand-bys to the half-capacity crowd. Jokes about airlines became jokes about flying El Al. Traffic cops became guards at checkpoints, and jerks who talk too loudly on cell phones were the same jerks, except suddenly they spoke Hebrew. (And hey, what a weird language, huh folks? But seriously...)

Of the self-billed "three Heebs and a camel jockey," Palestinian Ray Hanania jibed well with what seemed to be a largely Jewish audience, but Yisrael Campbell, the closing stand-up, really stood out. Both because he was wearing basic Orthodox black, head-to-toe but, more importantly, because his breezily delivered stories about being an American-born Irish/Italian former Catholic who converted to Judaism, moved to Israel and married an Egyptian Muslim stood out against the stilted Catskills-esque wokka-wokka of the guys who were clearly, by the time it was all over, his warm-up acts.

None of the comics really got the crowd rolling, but Campbell connected, riffing on the conversion process and what adult males go through in lieu of circumcision and — maybe most impressive — managing to segue into a sombre, no-joke aside about friends he lost in a terrorist bombing and how Jews mourn before returning to goofy bombast about buying clothes for his preemie daughters at Baby Gap.

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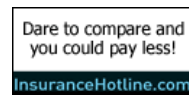


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