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June 4th, 2009

## Seán Cullen

### Cullen the herd

Dave Jaffer

*Seán Cullen goes a step above with I Am a Human Man tour*

Hearing Seán Cullen's voice over the phone brings back some cherished memories. When Cullen was first finding notoriety with Toronto-based comedy trio Corky and the Juice Pigs, I was in high school. After school, I'd listen to recordings of their skits and songs and get every third joke. Truth told, it was comedy I'd never heard before and didn't understand - weird, absurd stuff that, for me, didn't fit the notion of what comedy could be.

But damn did it ever work.

For 20 years, Seán Cullen's career has had a jack-of-all-trades quality. He's done stand-up, performed at festivals, had television shows, been in movies and musicals and even written books. And now he's back on the road because, well, he hasn't done it in about 10 years.

"I'm an old man, I have to go on the road to avoid creditors," he says from his home in Toronto. Now, the serious reason: "I haven't performed [live] comedy in a long time. I've done shows, I've done festivals and stuff, but you never do more than 10 minutes at a time. So I thought I'd get out and put on a new show with a lot of new material."

Cullen's show, *I Am a Human Man*, is modelled after his album of the same name, which he created with the help of Robbie Roth, his writing partner and a producer and composer in his own right. Now that *I Am a Human Man* (the album) is completed, Cullen says their next project is a musical that takes place during the Space Race.

"The great thing about musicals is no one can steal them from you. The music industry, and movies, they're all battling with piracy, and the great 'h' ]b[ 'UVci h'a i g]W'g'g'bc'cbY VWb'ghYU' ]h Z'ca 'mci " You have to come to see the show. There's no other way to experience it. That's a big draw for me."

He also adds: "There should be a Conan [thY'Barbarian] musical. I think that would be fantastic."

Performing in the capital is nothing new to Cullen. As such, he's prepared for what he believes is a very different crowd. "What I always find about Ottawa," he says, "is people are extremely well-educated there, and pretty open to things, and smart. And they've read a 'chUbX'hYm']j Y ]b'hY]f' minds a lot."



Cullen: "There should be a Conan [the Barbarian] musical."

That said, he adds, "I don't think I try to change my show in any way for any specific audience or any specific town. I don't pull my punches. I'm assuming if you've paid for tickets you're going to enjoy what I do."

***I Am a Human Man Tour***

**By Seán Cullen**

@ Shenkman Arts Centre

(245 Centrum Blvd.)

June 5, 7:30 p.m.

[www.shenkmanarts.ca](http://www.shenkmanarts.ca)