

GAVIN STEPHENS

PARK BENCH ONTOLOGY

COMEDY FOR COLLAPSING REALITIES



BIO

Working class comic, writer, and cultural irritant.

Juno-nominated comedian and Canadian Screen Award-winning writer Gavin Stephens draws on his working-class Caribbean roots to bring a sharp, unflinching perspective to the stage. His comedy doesn't chase the room – it's a live existential interrogation. Every show is a unique experiment: weird, risky, and uncomfortably honest, where absurdity, ideas, and uncomfortable truths collide.

His Juno-nominated album *All Inclusive Coma* proved that undeniable work speaks for itself. With *Park Bench Ontology*, Gavin delivers blue-collar critiques wrapped in existential dread – where polite liberalism, market virtue, and nationalist performance art don't survive contact with the material.

Gavin has performed at *Just for Laughs* Montreal and Toronto, *SXSW*, the *Hamilton Fringe*, and the *South African Comedy Festival*, with two network comedy specials and two solo shows (*Spectacular*, *Spectacular* and *Object of Strangeness*), and has appeared on *CBC's LOL*, *The Debaters*, and *CTV's Comedy Inc*. He's also a columnist for *CBC Hamilton*.

Commissioned by the *Art Gallery of Hamilton* to create unique comedy tours of their *Metamorphosis: Visions of Antiquity in the Modern Era* exhibit and Black History Month programming, his practice extends beyond the stage. He is also the creator of *hermit-cast*, a location-aware weather app that generates anti-capitalist reasons to stay home or quietly quit – functional software as ideological object. He is currently developing *The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth*, a documentary examining nerd culture as a social and political identity – how it functions as an escape from freedom, a ready-made community built equally on belonging and gatekeeping.

PARK BENCH ONTOLOGY

Identity. culture. capitalism. dread. repeat.

Park Bench Ontology isn't a podcast – it's a low-stakes philosophical crisis disguised as a pop culture conversation. Each episode, comedian and writer Gavin Stephens explores the invisible ideologies beneath our everyday lives, using everything from sitcoms to sci-fi, Baudrillard to Black Twitter.

It's a show for people who feel like something's off, but can't always name what. Listeners can expect cultural criticism with jokes, existential spirals with hope, and just enough structure to feel like you're not losing your mind.

Themes:

- Ontological collapse
- Whiteness & identity performance
- Capitalism as myth and meme
- Afro-Absurdist resistance
- Meaning breakdown in media overflow

ARTIST STATEMENT

I make comedy for the end times. My work explores whiteness, capitalism, and symbolic violence through a neurodivergent lens – not as abstract theory, but as the psychic wallpaper of everyday life. Drawing from Black existentialism, media theory, and the absurd, I use stand-up, writing, and podcasting to interrogate the stories we live by: race, class, identity, and the capitalist dream state.

Influenced by thinkers like Mark Fisher, Octavia Butler, and Baudrillard – as well as late-night cartoons and sci-fi pulp – my art collapses the boundary between the hilarious and the horrifying. I'm interested in the moments where ideology breaks down, where anxiety leaks through the cracks of normalcy, and where laughter becomes a survival tactic.

I've always made work that disrupts – not to shock, but to show what's already there, hiding in plain sight. I believe art should be as accessible as it is critical, as funny as it is philosophical. I don't offer answers. I offer glitches in the system.

