

# Ty Cooper Hosts 2 Upcoming Events

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PVCC's Open Mic Stand, hosted by Ty Cooper, is a free public event where anyone can sign up to perform an hour before it starts. The last Open Mic Stand was held Sept. 9, and I'm grateful to not have missed it. You had to be there is all I can sincerely say. I asked the technical staff if it would be recorded or live-streamed, but "out of respect for the performers," it was not. You only get that one chance to experience it. As ephemeral as Sept. 9's event was, it left a nice lasting memory.

Cooper is a creator, an award-winning producer and director. His newest screenplay *Amanda* premieres Nov. 12 and 13 at Vinegar Hill Theatre, in Charlottesville. At Open Mic Stand, he was a wonderful host. Welcoming and truly interested, Cooper wants to know when he asks, "How are you?" The audience, albeit small, was receptive. We got to know each other quite well.

One poet, a student at PVCC, reflected on Cooper's question during their time on stage. In their original piece, they ask, "Do you want to know?" "Fine," "okay," and "good" are not very honest answers. Do you really want to know how one is? Most would rather hear a lie, than hear a heavy truth. There's so much to be truly said, rather than to give a false one-worded response. But do you really want to know? We can all relate to their frustration for this damned question.

A storyteller came to recite two excerpts that day. Their voice was a deep and powerful bass, so captivating. I can't remember what the stories were about, but their voice stuck with me like a wordless melody that lingers in your head. The lines were articulated so nicely that if I did not see them reciting in front of me, I would have thought I was listening to a professional audiobook recording.

Two comedians, one a PVCC student and the other a California native, did routines. They were there to test their new material in front of an audience. The masks on the audience's faces made it hard to tell, but there were certainly smiles. When the audience did laugh, the jokesters then knew for sure they delivered good stuff. There were certainly more jokers in the room, however. In between some of the dramatic pieces, Cooper got some banter going to lighten

up the mood. We got to talking about little dogs, randomly. It was nice to balance the drama with some comedy, I thought.

Towards the end of the night, after all the signees had performed, we still had some time for



anyone to go up. One man, a Christian worship leader, went up and read a few hymns. He had asked for feedback. Some audience members gave theirs, and I recommended establishment of metrical flow to the verses. Putting a pencil to his printed hymn, he took note. I appreciated how open this Open Mic Stand was.

Sept. 9's Open Mic Stand was a great way to get back into the rhythm of things. Cooper had not been on campus since before the pandemic, due to lockdowns. Now, he has plans to come more and share publicly with the community. Along with the next Open Mic Stand on Nov. 11, he will be hosting the free Documentary Filmmaking Workshop on Oct. 22. He wants us to share our creative talents, like he does his. While the filmmaking workshop will focus on capturing and recording moments, PVCC will not be doing such a thing with these public events. So, whether you perform or not, I encourage everyone to attend, because I don't want anyone to miss it.