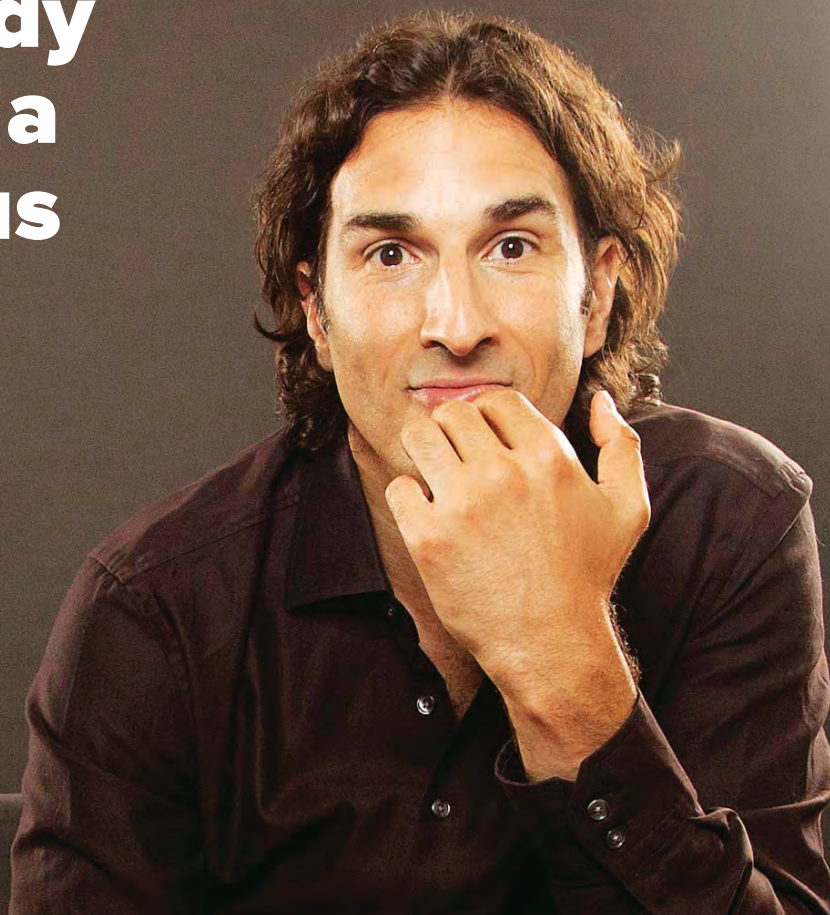


# Comedy Takes a Serious Side

Comedian Gary Gulman to headline JFS Spotlight Event May 12.



Gary Gulman

SUZANNE CHESSLER CONTRIBUTING WRITER

**T**here are two sides expressed through Gary Gulman's outlook, and he is about to show both on Michigan stages. His inclinations converge in ways that allow certain segments to be emphasized according to the audience.

His comedic side will dominate the focus of his appearance Wednesday evening, May 11, at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor as he performs the act solely written by him — “Gary Gulman: Born on 3rd Base.”

His more serious side takes charge Thursday evening, May 12, as he discusses his continuing battle with depres-

sion in a presentation for the Jewish Family Service's Spotlight Event at Temple Israel's Outdoor Pavilion in West Bloomfield. Dollars raised provide services for vulnerable community members.

“In Ann Arbor, I'll be doing a show about the disadvantages and advantages I've had in America because of my rather impoverished upbringing but also my God-given talents and circumstances,” said Gulman, who has been featured on TV's comedy specials and talk shows as well as in a recurring role on the streaming Hulu series *Life & Beth* starring Amy Schumer.

“For Jewish Family Service,

I will do more humor specific to the American Jewish experience as well as discuss some of the mental health issues I've had in my life. I'll also talk about how Jewish Family Service enabled me to go to Hebrew school and [experience] one summer at a camp.”

When Gulman was 18 years old, he was diagnosed with a major depressive disorder, but he believes it was probably something left undiagnosed during his childhood in Massachusetts. He remembers episodes of severe depression, hopelessness and despair from those earlier years.

From 2015-2017, he had occurrences that placed him

in the hospital on a number of occasions, and he talked about his recovery during an HBO special called *The Great Depresh*, which premiered in 2019 as produced by Judd Apatow and is available in a recorded format.

“I receive emails and messages and letters from people who were moved or found *The Great Depresh* resonated with them,” Gulman said. “I'm very proud of that, and I've responded to almost every single one.”

“I'm still a little bit behind because they come in every single day. In some cases, I've met people at shows who found *The Great Depresh* helpful,



[some] in discussing [their problems] with their families and [others] understanding what a family member was going through.

"I've comforted a lot of people who were crying at the show because they were excited to share their experience with me. I'm very touched by that. It's very moving, and I'm very grateful to take something that had taken so much from me and given back in a way."

Gulman said his quest to become a comedian came before he started defining periods of depression. Although he earned an accounting degree at Boston College and worked in that field as well as doing some substitute teaching, his goal remained comic performance,

and he sought stage opportunities through open mic nights at small venues.

He tried his talents in California and got bookings on late night talk shows. In 2006, he moved to New York because of its club scene.


Gulman, 51, and married to actress-writer Sade, has a pro-

fessional and personal history in Michigan. He appeared at the Comedy Showcase in Ann Arbor over many years, often timing his appearances to visit with a nephew attending the University of Michigan.

"There were a lot of people in Ann Arbor over the years when I've performed there

who have told me *The Great Depress* resonated with them," he said. "The answer to how I recovered from my depression or have had an extended period of wellness is through medication, therapy, exercise and diet."

The particulars are being written into a memoir he began during pandemic constraints when he made sure to exercise and keep in touch with family and friends by phone to help maintain his well-being.

"The pandemic affected me in that I wasn't able to do any live shows, but I was very fortunate in that I have a memoir that occupied a lot of my time," he said. "It enabled me to do some creative work in writing." 

## Details

Gary Gulman will appear at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 11, at the Michigan Theater in Ann Arbor. Tickets start at \$29.50. (734) 668-8397. Michtheater.org. He will make a fundraising appearance for Jewish Family Service at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 12, at the Temple Israel Outdoor Pavilion. Registration at 6:15 p.m. \$65. (248) 592-2339. Jfsspotlightevent.org.

## "I WILL DISCUSS SOME OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES I'VE HAD."

— GARY GULMAN

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