



Carrie Hardie for Serious Comedy presents

## A SELECTION OF LIVE SHOWS STREAMED ONLINE AND TAILORED FOR LOCK DOWN

What do you do when your whole job revolves around live comedy shows and suddenly all of your work gets cancelled for the foreseeable future and everyone is stuck indoors for who-knows-how-long?

When live events were shut down in Australia back in March of this year, producers, performers, publicists, production, and front of house staff were all suddenly left with gaping holes in their work schedules and bank accounts. Now there is a real concern for the long term viability of an industry which has contributed [\\$111bn per year to the Australian economy](#) and everyone in the industry is very worried. But, in their own small way, the Serious Comedy team are adapting their practice and approach to bring live performances online in a way that captures the essence of being in an audience at a live, bricks and mortar event.

Stand-up comic Yianni Agisilaou, who has recently returned to live in his home city of Melbourne after 15 years in the UK was the guinea pig in the first online experience, working with producer Carrie Hardie and film director Richard Martin Edwards to adapt his sell-out festival show *The Simpsons Taught Me Everything I Know* into a streaming event (complete with PowerPoint and audience participation) via the online platform Zoom.

Yianni says, “*after some initial trepidation about the novelty and the technical aspects, I soon found that even though there are slight differences, my favourite part of performing - connecting with a room full of people - was in essence, more or less the same.*” And the feedback from the first 112 people who tuned into the show echoed that same sentiment with lots of people vowing to return to see more of the online offerings from Serious Comedy.



Yianni Agisilaou performs *The Simpsons Taught Me Everything I Know* for the first time online.

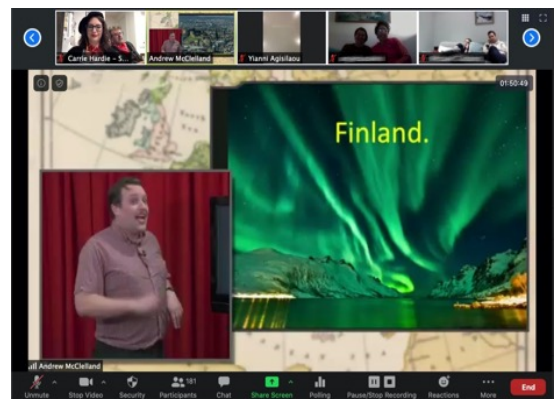
Richard, normally a director and producer in television and the corporate world, who was brought in by Serious Comedy to ensure a professional polish on the filmed gigs says, “*[live streaming is] actually something I’d been wanting to explore for a while so this whole pandemic thing helped make that happen. While my normal work is a great way to earn a living doing something I love, it leaves little time for personal projects and things closer to my heart. So, this whole covid thing has actually been a breath of fresh air in some ways. It’s allowed me the time to put effort into something I really believe in and have become passionate about instead of sitting around, going stale and worrying about how screwed up this whole situation is. The only problem is, it’s gone so well that I actually haven’t followed up with any of my corporate clients to show them what I was talking about in the first place.*”

Jump forward a few weeks, and following a [news feature on ABC News \(27 April 2020\)](#), Serious Comedy has upped its game to produce a selection of shows – all tailor-made for an online, locked-down audience. And the shows are getting more and more technically ambitious – with multiple camera angles and live vision mixing, interactive PowerPoints and now a live cooking segment and a comedy cabaret show with a musical accompaniment (on multiple instruments). It’s an interesting technical and



creative challenge for shows that are being beamed out into the world from a pop-up TV studio in a living room in Melbourne's Inner West, but it's been immense fun for the team and audiences alike.

Andrew McClelland, who performed his show *A Seated Walking Tour of Western Europe* and has another performance of the same coming up in late May, said, "I never thought an online show could be anywhere near as fun as live performance, but being able to perform for an audience all over the world as they enjoy the show from the comfort of their own homes was an absolute joy. This truly has been the silver lining to the world's present woes."



Andrew McClelland takes his audience on a whirlwind tour of Western Europe from the comfort of their living



Simon Palomares' reveals his French Apple Tart from Serious Comedy's first live cooking segment

Simon Palomares, who had his first performance of his 'tonight-style' show *Locked Down & Loaded* on Friday 8 May, had already been experimenting with live streaming performances to Spanish speaking audiences that he's cultivated in Europe and South America. He says, "there's something about performing to people in their homes, it's immediate and the performance gives way to philosophical chat very quickly, especially when we are sharing a global experience, suddenly we have more in common, everyone is baking bread, everyone has watched Tiger King". [Watch a highlight of Simon making a French Apple Tart \(or Tarte Tatin\) here.](#)

Louisa Fitzhardinge is the first two person show that will stream live. Her comedy cabaret called *Comma Sutra* is a show about grammar, and a love of language. It's sold out and been nominated for awards in festivals across Australia, but this will be the first time presenting to a remote audience. It's got singing, multiple instruments (and multiple languages), PowerPoint and audience interaction, but the technical complexities haven't fazed Fitzhardinge. She says, "in a theatre, you're messing with lighting, figuring out seating configurations, making sure your mic won't feed back when you walk

into the audience. Here, a major consideration is making sure the cat doesn't try to get on stage while you're performing." But while there are lots of comedy shows on offer, as part of a balanced entertainment diet, Serious Comedy is also streaming a live poetry reading with veteran actor and author Alan Lovett, who at 75 is still determined to find new ways of performing. [His 30 second promo video is already being described as "captivating" and "beautiful"](#) online. "People say they don't like poetry, but that's as silly as saying you don't like television or you don't like music – there's almost certainly a particular area that you'll love, even if you haven't discovered it yet." And for 30 minutes,



Louisa Fitzhardinge's show will be the first online Serious Comedy show with musical accompanist.



audiences will be treated to works both serious and funny from Banjo Paterson, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Spike Milligan, Shakespeare, Sylvia Plath and Roald Dahl among many others. And all done from memory.

One of the main topics of debate in the performing world surrounds how performers can try to ensure they're not just giving away the main source of their income (outside of global pandemic) when everyone's taken such a hit. For Serious Comedy the solution has been to charge on a basis of affordability. The shows are all ticketed, but are sold on a 'Pay What You Can' model. Audience members can choose to buy a ticket for \$5, 10, or \$20 - or, if money is very tight, they can book a free ticket (as long as they promise to tell some friends about the show). Serious Comedy producer, Carrie Hardie, says she made the choice to adopt this model because *"although it's important to value the time and skill that people in the creative arts use to*



*Alan Lovett presents Poems to Lock Down to - verses to delight the young and the young at heart*

*create these works, and hopefully financially support*

*the industry in this time, we also need to recognise that people across lots of industries have been hard-hit financially. In general, people have been generous and supportive in purchasing tickets, but during this time especially, we don't want lack of funds to be a barrier to people accessing our shows."*



*The performer still gets to see their audience, but in a different way to a normal gig in a traditional venue.*

What's next? Plans are in the works for cocktail making classes (with a twist), some storytelling sessions, and because the team is nothing if not creatively ambitious, a live, multi-location *Big Gig*-style variety show. The only limitations are the imagination and NBN.

### **What audience members have said when we asked them what they thought:**

"that was the most amazing thing I've ever seen!!! It was incredible!!! It was so good I even turned my camera on! Which I never do!"

"Amazing. It feels like I'm watching colour TV for the first time!"

"How professional it was considering [it's so new]. It didn't feel amateur or awkward, it felt like you all had it under control."

"[My favourite thing about the show was] that it was live! Friends from UK and Aus and all over, all together!"

For bookings and more information on all shows, head to <https://www.seriouscomedy.com.au/special-online-lockdown-shows/>

Full bios on each performer and information about Serious Comedy can be found at <https://seriouscomedy.com.au> and media kits including high res images are available at the unlisted link <https://seriouscomedy.com.au/media-page>

**Listings continue on the following page...**





**UPCOMING SHOWS IN MAY**

**Yianni Agisilaou: Australia Says Welcome (Conditions Apply)  
8:30pm (AEST) Thursday 14 May**



1965: Yianni's Mum is called a dirty w\*g by her teachers.

1994: Yianni is called the same by his classmates.

2019: Yianni is FINALLY called a straight white guy. Achievement, unlocked.

From his roots in Cyprus (ancient island colonised by the Brits) to Australia (ahem...) Yianni presents an hour of stories and stand up for anyone from anywhere else (and that's most of us) about when Australia says (and doesn't say) welcome.

Check out some tasters of Yianni here

[Yianni Agisilaou: Gay Marriage comedy set from Pockets of Equality TV special](#)

[Yianni Agisilaou: The Simpsons Taught Me Everything I Know trailer:](#)

**Alan Lovett: Poetry to Lock Down to  
7:00pm (AEST) Saturday 16 May (30mins)**



A short evening of poetry to delight the young and the young at heart where you can expect works both serious and funny from Banjo Paterson, Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Spike Milligan, Shakespeare, Sylvia Plath and Roald Dahl among many others. And all done from memory.

As an actor and playwright, Alan has appeared in such different places as the Adelaide Festival Theatre, Cardiff Castle and Toronto University theatre. He has performed in Shakespeare, stage musicals and one-man plays. Check out the trailer here - [Alan Lovett: Poems to Lock Down to promo trailer](#)

**Louisa Fitzhardinge: Comma Sutra  
8:30pm (AEST) Saturday 16 May**



Louisa's found true love in the English language, but it's hard being a grammar nerd when there are people selling 'potato's' and misusing the word 'literally' at every turn. All she really wants is someone who'll snuggle up with her on the couch and seductively whisper puns into her ear. Ideally in multiple languages. Is that too much to ask?

It's nerdy. It's pun-filled. And it might just make you want to learn a language... or at least start erasing those damn stray apostrophes on cafe blackboards.

**Andrew McClelland: A Seated Walking Tour of Western Europe  
8:30pm (AEST) Thursday 28 May**



The ONLY responsible way to travel. Armed with Google Street View, a big screen and an enthusiastic but flawed knowledge of history, Andrew guides you (rather hurriedly) through Europe's greatest cities and towns. See the things! Learn their stories! Get no exercise! Never has a European walking tour been so quick, funny and indeed, cost effective