

RAPID FIRE **Bill Bailey**

From *Nanny McPhee* to the hilarious *Black Books*, and his own sell-out world tours, British comedian Bill Bailey, 46, is an expert at making people laugh. Near 2am, after a gig, adrenaline still pumping, and with the squawk of parrots in the background, the multi-instrumentalist, actor and nature lover answers our questions.

ARE YOU NORMALLY UP AT 2AM? If I've had a gig, certainly. If the gig finishes at 10ish, there's two hours of adrenaline that usually kicks in that takes you through to half two or thereabouts. And from there on I'll probably just become a gibbering wreck.

WHAT ARE YOU LIKE TWO HOURS BEFORE A GIG? What tends to happen is the falafel and the salad and the drinking of the fizzy water. I can't eat too late. If I have a meal before a show I can barely speak.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST STAND-UP GIG. A lot of the early ones I did were total shambles. I'd forget what I was going to say, try and remember half a routine and put that with another routine and get it all the wrong way.

WORST THING THAT'S HAPPENED? I had a recurring nightmare where I was on the big stage doing a gig and I forgot everything I was going to say. Completely blank, standing there, just shrugging.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE ANIMAL? I quite like puffins. Puffins are great. They're amazing-looking things with beautiful coloured beaks. They're quite cute. They fly underwater and moo like cows, so anything that does that gets my vote.

YOUR FAVOURITE INSTRUMENT? At the moment, a bouzouki I've got. Not a bazooka. That would be against all health and safety regulations, but a bouzouki. It's a Greek stringed instrument like a mandolin except it's bigger and it's got a different tuning. It makes a great twangy twingly sound and it's a great joy to play.

YOUR FAVOURITE WORD? Incandescent. It can mean a kind of gas, it can also be referring to a person in terms of brilliance. It's often



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referred to people as "incandescent with rage", so it looks like they've actually started to combust in a brilliant ball of flame. I like the brilliance of it. The idea of a bright brilliance that burns with intensity, that appeals to me.

WHAT'S THE COLLECTIVE NOUN FOR A GROUP OF COMEDIANS? It's probably a gaggle or an ego.

IF AN EGO OF COMEDIANS ARE HANGING OUT AND SOMEONE MAKES A JOKE, WHO GETS TO USE IT? Whoever is the first to say, "I'm going to use it". Comics are notoriously competitive and will always try to outdo each other. There's a kind of respect, though, for each comic's act, because your act is your livelihood. A very dim view is taken of anyone who nicks material from anyone else.

IF YOU WERE IN A POLITICAL PARTY WHAT WOULD BE YOUR POLICIES? One of the main ones would be schooling in the woods. Once a week a school has to take all the pupils out and do a lesson in the woods and then come back as normal. Kids aren't let out (enough).

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR SPECIAL SUBJECT AT TRIVIA? Indonesia. I've been travelling there for the past 12-13 years. I love it. It's so different from Europe. It's so different from Britain.

We're a country that's very serious, a nannying state where we have laws for everything, signs for everything, cameras everywhere, registration, licensing, everything regulated. We have systems in place. Go to Indonesia and there's none of that. (They) have a police force, but they're not really interested. Sometimes I wouldn't want to live there, it would probably be frustrating, but sometimes going to a country that can be out of control can be quite liberating.

YOUR FAVOURITE NOVELTY SONG? Probably *Ernie* (from Benny Hill). He drove the fastest milk cart in the west.

Sally Browne
Bill Bailey performs at Brisbane's QPAC July 10-12; Qtix 136 246.

THE BACK STORY



THIS WEEK: Fred Leone, 31, aka Rival MC of soulful hip-hop group Impossible Odds, talks to **Marie-Christine Sourris** about beatboxing in the shower, growing up in Brisbane and performing at the 10th anniversary of Australia's largest indigenous youth hip-hop and RnB cultural festival, *Stylin' Up*.

I PERFORMED at the first *Stylin' Up* and almost every year since. I've got quite a collection of shirts to prove it. It's cool to look on the back of them to see the artists who performed. For the first five years, I didn't even make the list. Now I'm on that shirt.

At the first festival there were 400-500 people. Now it's crazy! It's so big. It amazes me what a nice atmosphere it is. It's just a really nice vibe and a really cool day.

In 2006 I performed in New York with The Apostles NYC. I opened the show for them with a didgeridoo then got up and performed. It was pretty cool. I was there for a Young World Leaders conference at the United Nations, representing indigenous youth. I spent a whole week at the UN headquarters.

I work during the day as a music technology instructor at a recording studio, the Deception Bay Flexible Learning Centre. Every night I come home and work on music.

For the last few months I've been working hard on getting my label under way. I've just signed two new acts. I've had plenty of sleepless nights. Their singles will come out on iTunes the day of *Stylin' Up*.

I grew up listening to everything. My family is Aboriginal, South Sea and Tongan. I remember Mum and Dad playing records when I was four or five - Bob Marley, Johnny Cash, Herbie Hancock, everything. As I got older, I got into hip-hop.

I've been beatboxing and rapping since I was 12 or 13. Where did I practise back then? In the shower mainly. I didn't have any money so that was how I got my music fix.

When I was 16 I hooked up with MC Saviour. He taught me pretty much everything there is to know about MC-ing (mike controlling or rapping). Through the group I joined, *Recipe for Disaster*, we met pretty

much everybody in the Australian hip-hop scene who's around today, and got to play gigs with them.

My first gig was at Browns Plains Youth Festival in 1996 or 1997. I rapped in a 20-minute set and did all original songs I'd written with my mate.

After that, I started learning how to write. I grew up in low socio-economic areas so I started writing about my immediate surroundings, which weren't too positive. Even when I was a kid I was always talking about that, using it as a means of coping, as an outlet.

Otherwise, I don't know, I could have ended up like a lot of other people I saw when I was growing up.

There are plenty of negative role models out there that kids could

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take after, especially in hip-hop.

So I try to steer away from it, give positive messages, make some party music as well. I want to inspire young people to take a hold of their dream and run with it.

I'm teaching my kids how to beatbox now. Jalun is 17 months, he has his little thing going on, and my other son Jamaji, 4, is really good.

I threw away a lot of CDs a couple of years ago. I looked at them and thought, "Is this really what I want my kids to hear?" Now they can listen to *The Wiggles*.

I listen to a bit of Rain Man, The Herd, Archie Roach, John Butler Trio. My kids will have a good appreciation for all kinds of music.

Stylin' Up is on Saturday at C.J. Greenfields Sports Complex, Inala. Details: stylinup.com.au

ITCH - WHAT'S HOT ON THE RADAR



ARE YOU RIPE FOR RIPE?

Head to Doonan in the Sunshine Coast hinterland on Saturday for Ripe, a musical festival featuring acts such as The Cat Empire, Grinspoon (above), Birds of Tokyo, British India and many other Aussie talents. The action happens at the House With No Steps, Doonan. Details: ripenoosa.com. Tickets: moshix.com.au



NO GUTS, NO GLORY TOUR

Airbourne will be back in Australia later this year for their No Guts, No Glory Tour, their first here since 2007. This great live rock band, fronted by Joel O'Keefe, plays the Hi-Fi in Brisbane on October 23. Their latest album *No Guts, No Glory* follows the band's 2008 debut *Runnin' Wild*. Find details at thehifi.com.au



FINDING SANCTUARY

Food, fashion, art, music - all at the Sanctuary Cove Festival, June 5-20, starting with Champers and Pampers at Hyatt Regency on June 5, a hip-hop dance party for kids on June 6, fashion workshops on June 9 and more, including jazz maestro James Morrison (above) in concert on June 12; sanctuarycove.com/events



PAUL GREENE ALBUM LAUNCH

Head to Brisbane Powerhouse (brisbanepowerhouse.org) on Thursday where former Olympian turned troubadour Paul Greene launches his latest album, *Everywhere is Home*. Also catch Greene at the Soundlounge (thesoundlounge.com.au), Currumbin, on Friday and Joe's Waterhole (5442 8144), Eumundi, on Saturday.



DEBUT FOR EXPRESSIONS

Natalie Weir's first full work as artistic director for Expressions Dance Company debuts at QPAC on Friday. *Where the Heart Is*, stars Richard Causer (above), and reveals the emotionally charged memories of a young man's past. New score by John Rodgers. Lyrics inspired by David Malouf. Bookings 136 246.



BRIEF INTERLUDE

If you're up for a deliciously wicked circus cabaret extravaganza, then *Brief's* is it. The all-male cabaret, including colourful and muscle-bound Captain Kidd Magnus Hastings (above), plays the Judith Wright Centre, Fortitude Valley, at 7.30pm, Wednesday to Saturday. Details 3872 9000 or judithwrightcentre.com



BELLA BRISBANE

Bongiorno Brisbane! Italian Week starts Wednesday, serving up fine Italian food, wine, fashion, music, art and sport. At GoMA, enjoy the Oz premiere of Italian masterpiece *Cabiria*. Elsewhere there's the *Commedia Dell'Arte*, Italian Waiters Race and, on Friday, entertainment in the Queen Street Mall; italianweek.com.au