



Bill Bailey Tour – Reasons to be cheerful as comedy comes to Rome

- News

May 31, 2014



Bill Bailey played his first ever show in Rome on Sunday night. The comedy loving crowd had been waiting expectantly for the appearance of the surreal funny man and duly gave the British comedian a rapturous reception. The past month has seen him travel from Amsterdam to Bergen as part of the European leg of his Qualmpeddler Tour.

Why all the fuss I hear you cry? Well, we don't get a lot of comedy in Rome, stand up is not such a tradition here; you have 'showmen' if anything (a term which fills me with dread). In fact, we don't get a lot of anyone much who is prepared to venture down the boot. Except for a few wonderful, sunny weeks in July, bands, singers and comedians usually tend to get as far south as Milan, Padova, maybe Florence, but the majority never make it to Rome. So when I saw that such a big name comedian was coming to Rome, it really was an unexpected event.

Now, I'll admit it, I'm maybe not Bill Bailey's biggest fan. I wasn't even going to go. But then I discovered that the promoters of the event, SPQRecords and Productions, were in fact a one woman band. Victoria Wyatt is the architect of this new venture and secured her first notable coup in bringing Bill Bailey to the eternal city. Victoria founded the company to bring comedy and music to Rome and wanted to begin with a big name. "There is a great base here with expat entertainment... Rome Comedy Club and Acting in English but I want to build on that and bring over top entertainers and companies that do not normally come here. Rome should be one of the cultural capitals of the world, but it is far from it right now." It's a remarkable ambition and certainly one worth supporting. So I went along. And I'm so glad that I did.



Image Bill Bailey with Victoria Wyatt

The theatre was packed with English speaking expats and interested Italians eager for the show to start. Who knew that Bill Bailey was political? I'm a great believer in a 'little bit of politics' and as it was the day of the European elections we were treated to a rant against the "shake your fist and go arrrgggghhh" political parties of UKIP and Lega Nord. We Brits have apathy, but the Italian's apatia (stress the t) sounds way more sexy said Bill, like something you'd study at university.

After a detour into politics Italian style, we returned to Bailey's more usual/unusual material, from, people who say lol out loud in response to something funny instead of actually laughing – is this the hideous future of comedy he wondered?, to his playing the bible and the difference between the fantasy of holidays and the sad and sometimes dangerous reality. I've been husky-dog-sledding, but I defy anyone not to recognise the horror of holidays with in-laws and of beautiful plans gone awry.

A first time for Bill in Rome, I asked Victoria how the show was received? Bill seemed to have a great time. The techies (who don't speak a word of English) were amazed that people seemed to be laughing every 10 seconds or so – as of course they did not get any of it! Bill was very happy to be the start of something here... for him it is all about building things up in new places and keeping things interesting."

After such a successful start, this is just the beginning of Victoria's mission: "I am working on bringing two other comedians here at the moment... both hopefully by the end of the year... One of them is a new emerging comic who is getting very big very fast, and the other is someone that many people will know and love (and a lot will love to hate), so hopefully those announcements will be made soon."

Victoria is open to suggestions as to who should be next to grace Rome with their presence. I'm starting the campaign for Dylan Moran. Here's to more comedy in Rome. Can't wait. Lol.