PRESS RELEASE – 10.03.2015

Simon Amstell

Why comedy?: Simon said he didn’t have the patience for doing anything other than standing up and talking.

Did you want to be famous?: “It was all I wanted”. Then I realised it didn’t bring joy and fulfilment. So then I started seeking out relationships.

Relationships: I am now in a fulfilling relationship, but it took a long time to find one.

Travelling: I have ‘found myself’ travelling, quite a few times. On a flight to Thailand, I was sitting next to a monk, who looked very calm, and I thought ‘I needed what he has’—which was Buddhism. I started taking up meditation. In Peru, he took ayahuasca with a shaman.

America: I’m completely new there which is exciting. It’s not really very different. I’m mainly in major cities: New York, LA, Chicago etc. All I’m talking about is ‘human things’, being ‘lonely, or depressed, or horny’. These are human things and I’m talking to human beings, so it doesn’t matter if I’m talking to them in the UK or America.

Memories of school: There was a school radio station which I was on. And I acted in the school shows, for example I played Fagin in Oliver Twist.

Writing: I’ve written a lot about my ‘family pain’ after Grandma’s House. I thought I was writing a sitcom about a family of lunatics; but I realised I was the lunatic. Now I know that the way to sit with your family without tensions is to accept that your family is going to be the same as last time. So I don’t really have much more to write about family. Writing stand-up is more spontaneous and natural than sitcom, you don’t have to think about structure.

What’s the most fun you’ve had on television?: Popworld was great fun. Also, the second series of Grandma’s House was great fun, I was less nervous having got over the fear of writing a sitcom for the first time.

Do you ever miss Never Mind the Buzzcocks?: I feel that once people say they like something, “you have to stop doing it”. Ideally I would just do one thing that was brilliant, and then die.

Veganism: It’s very difficult being a vegan. When you’re at a dinner party, you’re often there with non-vegans, ‘murders’. It’s difficult because you don’t want to be preachy.

Bonnie Tyler on Buzzcocks: She was very drunk. She was terrifying, but great fun. She was like an “insane person in the pub”.

The current state of British comedy: “I think I’m very good”. The best thing to do is buy the Grandma’s House DVDs and watch them. There isn’t anything going on at the moment like Brass Eye, or Alan Partridge.
Character in *Grandma’s House*: It was most difficult writing my own character. The easiest one to write was my mum. Sometimes she would phone, and I would just write down what she said.

Russell Brand: I’m jealous of him. I thought I was doing ok, I had written a film, and then he said he was going to start a revolution!

Lines which have bombed: The way I work out new material is to go in front of small audiences of about 100 people, and all I do is “bomb for about three months”. It takes a long time to build a good show, you need to find a place where you fail very safely.

Projects for the future: I’ve just finished writing a film. And I have a contract which the BBC to come up with something new. And “I’m making a cake”.

---

By Max Twivy

Head of Press, Lent 2015