

ABBY HOWELLS

Comedian / Playwright / Performer

Abby Howells is an extraordinary talent. A multiple-award-winning stand-up comedian and playwright (with a PhD in Theatre Studies) Abby has been entertaining audiences in ANZ, Asia and the UK for over a decade.

In July 2024 Abby returns to Melbourne with her Billy T Award-winning show *La Soupco* as part of Replay Festival. Written by Abby when she was 11 and performed by Abby now aged 33, *La Soupco* is a beguiling tale of love, loss, nautical trauma and deeply undiagnosed Autism. Despite being set in the wake of World War II, World War II, no historical research, verification or corroboration has been undertaken! For tickets and info visit <https://comedy.com.au/news/replay-festival-announced/>

Abby's first love is musical theatre but when cast in a pantomime of Red Riding Hood she discovered other people thought she was actually quite funny. So Abby got a haircut, hit the open mic scene in Aotearoa and, at the age of 20, discovered stand-up comedy was *the thing* she wanted to do in life. However, the upward trajectory of her early career was abruptly derailed when she was sexually harassed on stage in front of an audience including her parents.

Abby then co-founded, and became Head Writer for, the New Zealand female comedy collective *Discharge* where she wrote and performed in three shows; *What is this? Women's Hour?* (2012), *Benedict Cumberbatch Must Die* (which won the 2014 Highly Commended Award in Playmarket's b425 Competition), and an educational musical, *28 Days: A Period Piece* (2015) which toured schools throughout Aotearoa.

In 2014 Abby's screenplay, *Standing Up*, written as part of her MA in Scriptwriting (Victoria University's prestigious International Institute of Modern Letters), won the Brad McGann Award for Film Writing.

Abby's other writing credits include an audio play, *The Crash* (2015), released by Radio New Zealand; *Crossbow Cat* (2014), performed at Short and Sweet Festivals across Aotearoa, Asia, and Australia where it won both the Auckland Festival's People's Choice and Judges' Choice Awards; *Attila the Hun* (2017), performed as part of the Young and Hungry Festival and Dunedin Arts Festivals (NZ); and *White Men* (2018), performed at BATS Theatre and Dunedin Fringe Festival.

In 2019 Abby returned to stand-up touring her acclaimed second solo show *HarleQueen*, a celebration of trailblazing female comedians told through the prism of Abby's own personal comedy journey. It swept the pool of comedy awards winning the NZ International Comedy Festival's Directors' Award; the Wellington Theatre Awards' Peter Harcourt New Playwright of the Year, and Adelaide Fringe Festivals' Best Comedy, Week Four and Emerging Artist, and New Zealand Fringe Festival's Tour Ready Award.

Since then, Abby has been awarded a PhD in theatre studies for her thesis exploring how incarcerated women are portrayed in film and television; written and performed her third solo show *La SoupCo*, which won the 2023 New Zealand International Comedy Festival's Billy T Award and received a 5-star review in *The Age* at the 2024 Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Abby has also collaborated and performed with Angella Dravid in *The Impersonals* at the 2024 New Zealand International Comedy Festival.

Abby's acting credits include roles in the popular long-running NZ TV serial *Shortland Street* (2023) and in the film *The Royal Treatment* (2021); as well as on stage in the plays *The Bald Soprano* (2019), *Fold* (2018), *My Dad's Boy* (2017) and *Beards! Beards! Beards!* (2016) about a girl trying to grow a beard which toured New Zealand and the UK, including Edinburgh Fringe.



ABN 26 091 596 388

Melbourne
35 Easey Street
Collingwood, VIC 3066

PO Box 108
Fitzroy, VIC 3065

P +61 3 8417 0000

Sydney
Suite 4.04, 50 Holt Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010

P +61 2 9690 5922

www.token.com.au



Abby can be heard as a presenter on RNZ's smash hit comedy/history/conspiracy podcast *Did Titanic Sink* (for which she directed Season 2), as a guest on RNZ's *Bookmarks*, *Fast Favourites*, and *The Wireless: Live from the Watercooler*; as well as various podcasts such as *Backyard Stories* with Claudia Nankervis and *The Worst Idea of All Time* with Guy Montgomery and Tim Batt. She often appears as a panellist on NZ TV shows such as *7 Days*, *Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont-Spelling Bee*; and she has also been a guest on *Comedians Giving Lectures (NZ)* and *The Project (NZ)*.

Abby talks openly about being on the Autism spectrum and her special interests include *The Titanic* and the original *Baby-Sitters Club* books. Her perfect day involves reading a book while drinking tea on a train.

"I'm just a weirdo doing weird and funny jokes, and people like it! They really feel it. I've had so much heartening feedback from people who felt seen and heard by my story, from so many different industries – it's the shared experience of finding your place in the world you love."

TELEVISION

- 2024** Three (NZ) – **7 Days** (Regular Guest Panellist)
- 2023** Three (NZ) – **The Project** (Guest)
- 2023** Three (NZ) – **7 Days** (Regular Guest Panellist)
- 2023** Three (NZ) – **Guy Montgomery's Guy Mont-Spelling Bee** (Guest)
- 2023** Three (NZ) – **Last Laughs** (Stand-Up)
- 2022** Three (NZ) – **Comedians Giving Lectures** (Guest)
- 2023** TVNZ (NZ) – **Shortland Street** (TV Series), Role of 'Daisy Liddle'

TV WRITING

- 2024** Three (NZ) – **7 Days** (Writer)
- 2022** TVNZ (NZ) – **Kid-Sister** (Joke Writer)

LIVE SHOWS

- 2024** **The Improprofessionals** – *Abby Howells and Angella David*
Performed at 2024 New Zealand (NZ) International Comedy Festival
- 2023-4** **LaSoupCo** – *Solo Show*
Performed at 2024 Melbourne International Comedy Festival, 2023 NZ International Comedy Festival
- 2019-22** **HarleQueen** – *Solo Show*
Performed at 2022 Edinburgh Fringe Festival, 2021 NZ International Comedy Festival, 2020 Adelaide Fringe Festival, 2019 NZ Fringe Festival.
- 2014-5** **Glocknid: Dwarf Warrior** – *Solo Show*
Performed at NZ International Comedy Festival

THEATRE

- 2019** **The Bald Soprano**, Arcade Theatre Company (Dir: Alex Wilson) – Performed *'Mrs Smith'*
- 2018** **Fold**, Arcade Theatre Company (Dir: Alex Wilson)- Performed *'Karen'*



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- 2017** **My Dad's Boy**, Fortune Theatre (Dir: Anya Tate-Manning) – Performed 'Caitlin'
- 2017** **Improsaurus**, Fortune Theatre – Performed as 'Improvisor'
- 2015-16** **Beards Beards Beards**, Trick of the Light Theatre Company (Dir: Hannah Smith) – Performed 'Beatrix', Circa Theatre (Wellington), Nelson Arts Festivals, Hawkes Bay, Salisbury, Edinburgh Fringe Festival
- 2014** **Benedict Cumberbatch Must Die**, BATS Theatre, Dunedin Fringe Festival (Dir: Caitlin McNaughton) – Performed 'Genevieve'



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THEATRE WRITING

- 2018-24** **White Men** (Play) – Creator/Writer
Performances by Cue Go at University of Otago, Dunedin and Dunedin Fringe Festival (2024), Red Scare Theatre Co at BATS Theatre, Wellington (2018)
- 2017-18** **Attila the Hun** (Play) – Creator/Writer
Performed at 2017 Young and Hungry Festival (NZ), 2018 Dunedin Arts Festival (NZ)
- 2015** **28 Days: A Period Piece** (Musical) – Creator/Writer
Performed as part of NZ Schools Tour
- 2014-5** **Crossbow Cat** (Short Play) – Creator/Writer
Short and Sweet Festivals in Malaysia, the Philippines, Brisbane and Auckland
- 2014** **Benedict Cumberbatch Must Die** – Creator/Writer
- 2012** **What is This? Woman's Hour?** (Play) – Creator/Writer
Performed at 2013 Dunedin Fringe, 2014 New Zealand Fringe (Wellington)

RADIO

- 2024** **Did Titanic Sink** (Season 2 Director)
- 2023** **Bookmarks** (Guest)
- 2022** **Did Titanic Sink – Bonus Episode: The Extended Discussion** (Season 1, Presenter)
- 2022** **Did Titanic Sink** (Season 1, Co-Presenter)
- 2015** **The Wireless: Live from The Watercooler at The Basement Theatre** (Original Story)

PODCASTS

- 2024** **Backyard Stories with Claudia Nankervis – Abby Howells MIFC** (Guest)
- 2023** **The Worst Idea of All Time with Guy Montgomery and Tim Batt** (Guest)

OTHER LIVE WORK

- 2024** **Love is in the Air**– Stand-Up
Auckland Pride Festival (MOTAT, Auckland, NZ)
- 2023** **Guy Mont Spelling Bee**– Guest Panellist
Live Nation & Jubilee Street (Q Theatre, Rangatira, NZ)

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

- 2023** **Winner** – Billy T Award, New Zealand International Comedy Festival, for *La SoupCo*
- 2021** **Winner** – Director's Award, New Zealand International Comedy Festival, for *HarleQueen*
- 2021** **Nominee** – Best New NZ Play of the Year, Wellington Theatre Awards, for *White Men*
- 2020** **Winner** – Emerging Artist, Adelaide Fringe, with *HarleQueen*
- 2020** **Winner** – Best Comedy – *Week Four*
- 2019** **Winner** – Peter Harcourt New Playwright of the Year, Wellington Theatre Awards
- 2019** **Winner** – Adelaide Tour Ready Award, New Zealand Fringe Festival
- 2019** **Commended** – Green Light List, New Zealand Fringe Festival
- 2017** **Winner** – Plays For the Young: Teenagers Section, Playmarkets Annual Awards, for *Attila the Hun*
- 2016** **Winner** – Best Newcomer, New Zealand International Comedy Festival
- 2015** **Winner** – People's Choice Award, and Judges Choice Award, Auckland Festival for *Crossbow Cat*



2012

Winner – Best Comedy Award, Dunedin Fringe Festival

Exclusively represented by Token Artists

Contact: Anyez Lindop – 03 8417 0000 or anyez.lindop@token.com.au

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