



Riccardo Salizzo.

Height 192 cm

MC/Entertainer Biography

JOHNSON&LAIRD

Ric Salizzo is a New Zealand journalist, television presenter and producer. He is best known for producing and presenting long-running sports chat show SportsCafe, as well as executive producing and occasionally presenting sports current events show The Crowd Goes Wild. After failing the journalism course at Auckland Technical Institute, Salizzo began a career as a newsreader at radio station Tauranga's Radio 1XX. This was followed by a number of other newsreading positions at private radio stations, before moving to London to work at a radio news agency there. In 1986 Salizzo returned to New Zealand to fill a vacancy at television station TVNZ's One News sports reporting team. By 1988 he presented the national sports news for the first time. It was during this period that Salizzo formed production company Pasta Productions with friend and former schoolmate, All Black Sir John Kirwan. Pasta Productions produced several documentary films about the All Blacks on tour, such as best-seller The Good, The Bad and the Rugby. In the early 1990s he was also given the job of All Blacks Media Liaison Officer, which at the time was a fledgling role within the team structure. It also entailed looking after the media hype surrounding rising star Jonah Lomu. In 1996, Salizzo launched SportsCafe through new production company Leftfield, with initial sponsorship from the TAB. This role was to define his career, and the show's success translated into fame and recognition for Salizzo. His role on the show as both producer and presenter often involved bringing into line the other, more exuberant hosts, as well as behind-the-scenes work. At its peak, production of the show led to Salizzo part-owning a restaurant and bar complex on Auckland's Princes Wharf named Leftfield. When SportsCafe's initial run ended in 2005, Salizzo launched a new show entitled The Sugar Shack on TV3, which was soon cancelled. It remains notable for featuring an early television appearance of comedian and actor Rhys Darby. Salizzo brought SportsCafe back in 2008 for a return season, and again in 2011 for a series of live-streamed, online-only episodes in partnership with Telecom. In 2006, Salizzo developed a sports news show entitled The Crowd Goes Wild. It was designed to enter the tightly contested 7pm timeslot and be a flagship programme for SKY Network Television's newly acquired free-to-air channel Prime. The show has been successful and continues to run on weeknights with Salizzo as executive producer (credited as 'High Commander') and occasional presenter. Salizzo is a past member of the Board of Directors of the Auckland Blues. He is also engaged in consultancy work, advertising and public speaking from time to time. He was involved in the production and (along with the cast of SportsCafe and satirist John Clarke) performance of Fred Dagg's 1998 song "We Don't Know How Lucky We Are", which topped the New Zealand chart in July 1998. His other major contribution to the music scene came with his encouragement of, and role in the music video for, Neil Finn's anthem for the 1999 Rugby World Cup, "Can You Hear Us".

Testimonials.

"Ric Salizzo was an ideal after lunch speaker at our annual conference and was rated highly by attendees. Not only was he humorous and had some entertaining 'war stories', but his story was intermixed with some thought provoking anecdotes. We would highly recommend Ric as an after dinner speaker or one to lighten the mood of an event." - John Banks, CTFA

Testimonials continued...

"Ric Salizzo delivered MC duties at several AIG hospitality events during Rugby World Cup in the UK and he did a fantastic job at all of them. He was excellent at taking our brief and key messages and adapting it, injecting his own personality with the right level of humour and audience interaction. Ric is great on the mic and a very engaging speaker, and his rapport with the talent we used definitely got the most from them. "

