



Simon McKinney.

Height 178 cm

Master Of Ceremony Biography
JOHNSON&LAIRD

When Simon McKinney starts a joke, he doesn't always know where he'll end up. However, as his sparkling comic record shows, you can guarantee getting there will be one hilarious journey.

A natural born entertainer (just ask his former school teachers) Simon's famous for his hysterically accurate impressions of everyday people: you'll recognise the nasal drone of his supermarket checkout woman, the inept night taxi dispatcher, the matey community radio dj and the drunken walker. His Star Wars material has people choking into their drinks and his accents—Scottish, Irish and German—are spot-on.

After a decade on the comedy circuit, the award-winning comedian has clocked up hundreds of performances here and offshore. He's performed twice at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, once sweating through four shows a night, and has appeared in the famed British Jongleurs comedy clubs, the Comedy Store, and The Stand comedy bars in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

He's won best male comedian at the New Zealand International Comedy Festival, the Comedy Guild voted him best male comedian and he's been nominated for the prestigious Billy T James award.

Simon grew up listening to his parents' records of comedy legends Bill Cosby and the piano-playing wit Tom Lehrer and entertaining his classmates at school, but says he fell into comedy by accident. While voicing an animated fish called Hamish McGroper for kids' TV series Squirt, he teamed up with mates to do theatre sports in their down time. The guys were a hit, even with the notoriously hard-to-please Dunedin crowds and the group, called This Is Not a Drill, ended up touring the country with their live sketches. After that Simon nabbed his first spot on comedy show Pulp TV, and hasn't looked back since.

A crack improviser - his team won the Theatresports National Championships in 1997 when he was just 18 - his quick wit lends itself to any situation. He helped fan some comic flames at the New Zealand Firefighters' annual bash and entertained rowdy revellers on a flight from Sydney to the Queenstown winter festival.

However Simon's just as comfortable working seriously behind the scenes. He was a writer and field director for the Disney channel's Saturday show and co-wrote scripts for Squirt. He spent several years as a community radio dj in Southland (which gives him license to poke fun) and has worked on stop-motion animation projects for the Disney channel and C4. He's lent his voice to a number of offshore ads, and is a regular MC and headline act at Auckland's home of stand up, The Classic comedy bar.

A true-blue Southern Man, Simon reckons people smile more on the mainland and that the crowds there are "hard" because the people are naturally funny every day. He regularly heads home for a dose of Speights and to recharge the batteries with family in Wanaka. When he's not busy writing and perfecting his routines, his brain is in overdrive thinking of storylines and special effects gadgets for a

stop-motion animation project he hopes to get off the ground soon. Check out some of his work on You-Tube.

Testimonials.

Simon 's Smooth, relaxed style and tone hark back to the days of raconteur entertainers before it was even called standup; his snappy three-piece suit and blond quiff have me thinking 'Tintin Bond'. His affable, approachable personality has the crowd on-side all the way, and he barely even swears, so really in the present day comedy climate his old-fashioned glib charm is something of a unique selling point - Nik Smythe

"Just wanted to say thank you very much for suggesting Simon. He was outstanding last night, exactly what we were after and the fact he stayed on for a while and mingled with our guests was superb. "

- Jacobsens

"To say that Simon met our expectations would be a gross understatement. He entertained for a good hour with a mixture of stories and impersonations which, while having no particular theme, just seemed to flow naturally from one situation to another. Our audience went away extremely happy with their evening and our committee was delighted with his performance. We have absolutely no hesitation in recommending him to others as a contributor to their event as we are certain he will do a great job in whatever role he is requested to carry out. "

- Rotary Club of Alexandra

"Simon was second to none in his role as Mr Helpful at my client 's conference after-function. It was an unpredictable role to play and Simon was professional and effective throughout his character. Simon significantly contributed to the planning of the execution of his character which also added great value. "

-Roxana. 99

We have had feedback that Simon is the best MC we have had –and these awards have been going for 22 years now. Simon was professional but flexible and relaxed. He was incredibly funny and edgy but never inappropriate. He knows how to walk that fine line which is essential in a business environment. Except for their laughter the crowd was absolutely silent when Simon was doing his thing –they didn't want to miss a word. I thoroughly recommend Simon for corporate events–and we look forward to using him again in the future. "

- Export New Zealand Bay of Plenty



Testimonials continued...

"The smiles are still beaming this morning from such a fantastic night last night! Please accept our utmost appreciation for all the effort that was put in for such a hilarious night. It really was outstanding and hence I have attached our Best Buzz night award. You really did put on a great night that is being talked about constantly in the office."

- FCM Travel Solutions

"Simon 's decade on the comedy circuit (including extensive work in the UK and Europe)really shows. He was relaxed, comfortable on stage, friendly and highly appreciative of the audience, on the last night of his week long stretch at the Fran. Proving that our New Zealand comics are every bit as good as those foreign buggers, eh."

- San Francisco Bathhouse

"A keen observer of human behaviour, he re-enacts and embellishes the reactions of kids, parents and other interesting characters, with excellent comic timing and the skill of a seasoned actor. This intelligent gem is worth venturing out in the cold for."

- NZ International Comedy Festival

"A non stop rollercoaster ride through topics as varied as old people and their make-up, the etiquette of how to cope when confronted by a fart cloud on Queen Street, his life as a mascot down in Dunedin to community radio down southland way too. McKinney has a way of leading you down a path whose final destination you don 't quite know but you're sure to have a good time on the way. McKinney is a masterful comedian and I 'd thoroughly recommend you catching him."

- Lumiere

"His impressions are the highlight. From real people like the lovely old digger who runs Dunedin radio station 4XD, or his man-hating high school history teacher Mrs X, to Star Wars characters like Yoda, Han Solo and, best of all, his posh and creepy Obi-Wan who mixes up his light sabre with sex toys. His best is saved for last when he mimics the late - night taxi dispatch person whom he describes as "an angry, irate lady with a small, tight mouth."

-New Zealand Herald

