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Unsung Hero: Jill Edwards



100 people who make Brighton what it is: No. 23 is Jill Edwards. From running the UK's best stand-up workshop to the Comic Boom Comedy Club, Jill Edwards is banging Brighton's funny bone.

Your comedy workshops are extremely successful – can you make anyone funny?
I believe everyone's already funny. If you've ever laughed – you have a 'sense' of humour. The word 'sense' means 'an understanding of' and 'a feeling for'. Everyone already has that 'understanding' and 'feeling' for comedy. People just don't tend to develop that particular sense unless they go into the comedy business. I show them how to access and develop their latent comedy skills. People can believe they're not funny at all, which is usually what's funny about them. It's important to say that while everyone is capable of being funny, very few people are capable of being funny for a living.

You've set some amazing people on the right road – who've been your big successes?

They include Shappi Khorsandi, Hal Cruttenden, Shazia Mirza, Simon Evans, Francesca Martinez, Jimmy Carr, and his agent. Brighton successes include, Being Human creator Toby Whithouse, BBC New Comedy Award Winner 2011 Angela Barnes and Argumental's new team captain Seann Walsh.

What's the difference between being funny with your mates and funny onstage?

A shared idea of 'what's funny' is probably one of the reasons why you're all mates. Making your mates laugh in a pub is a world apart from performing well-crafted, concise, original comedy material on stage to an audience of total strangers. Your mates aren't paying you money to make them laugh.

What qualities do you look for in a new act for your Comic Boom night?

Originality is key. If you go to a standard new act night there's usually one, maybe two acts that stand out because they were brilliant. I put six of those stand-out acts on a bill each month with a headline circuit comic and a top MC. They need to entertain an upbeat, fun, friendly regular audience of around 300 who love original, interesting, fresh new comedy.

What's your favourite joke?

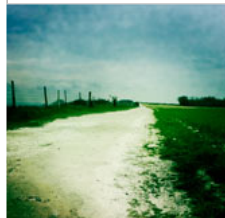
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WORDS AND PHOTO BY JAMES KENDALL



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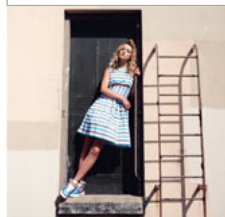
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