

# Brisbane has Wil to laugh

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TV AND FILM EDITOR

WIL Anderson may think he has the last laugh but it is Brisbane audiences who really have won out.

The comedian kicked off his five-performance gig at the Brisbane Comedy Festival to a sell-out audience on Thursday night and will headline the festival's final-day program tomorrow night.

Only in its second year, the festival's expanded program is on track to draw 25,000 people over its four-week run this year.

"To have a bigger program and to be selling slightly better than last year is fantastic," Brisbane Powerhouse program manager Sarah Neal said.

"We're really thrilled with the numbers and it's here to stay, we hope. It's really made an impact in that Brisbane knows it's got its own comedy festival now."

Anderson, who has played Brisbane numerous times in his near 15-year stand-up career,

## Monsters of fame Lady Gaga and Susan Boyle



said the festival was having a cultural impact on the city.

"A festival changes the way people watch comedy, definitely. It gives it an identity," the host of TV's *The Gruen Transfer* said.

"A festival crowd is a different sort of crowd; it's like they almost come looking for a bit more, and because they're seeing a lot more, they're willing to take a bit more of a risk. A festival encourages that."

The 2010 line-up, curated by Josh Thomas, consisted of 22

events including performances by Adam Hills, Frank Woodley, Peter Helliar, Jason Byrne, Felicity Ward and Brisbane's Melinda Buttle.

Anderson said the Brisbane Comedy Festival organisers had been savvy in their approach.

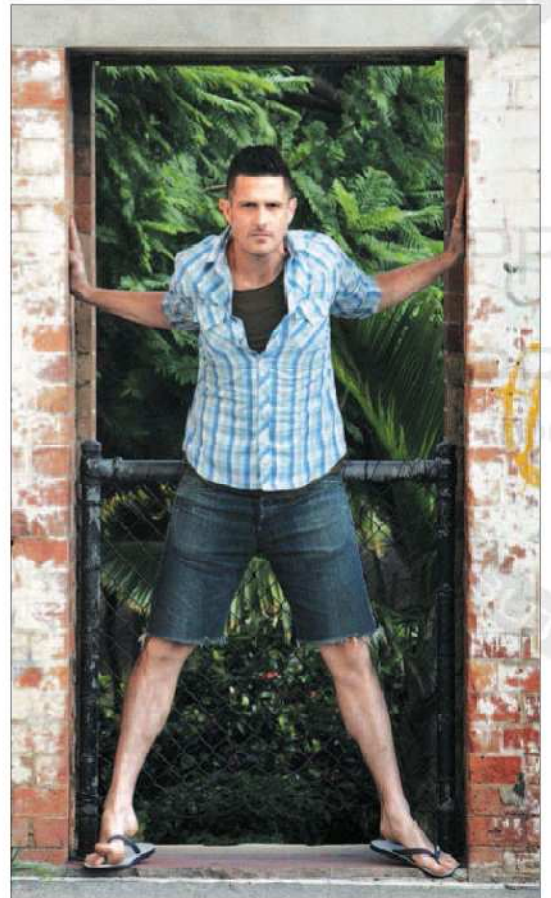
"They went 'OK, we got this much last year, let's grow it ... see if we can still fill that,'" he said. "They've been really smart with it. It's a great way to grow a festival."

"They've not overdone it. They've kind of put in enough shows so that everyone is doing well ... you haven't had a really big act here for three weeks which means no one else sells any tickets."

"A lot of times when people start festivals – and you see festivals come and go – it's because normally people go in way too big."

Several of this year's acts have been sell-outs.

Anderson's show *Wilful Misconduct* is also expected to sell-out with just a few seats left for his 10.30 show tonight.



COMEDY COMMANDO: Wil Anderson is one of the comedians tickling Brisbane's funny bone. Picture: Annette Dew