

INTERVIEW

Wil Anderson



At the time of this interview and with a matter of only weeks before the Fringe Festival, host of popular ABC TV panel shows, 'The Glasshouse' and 'The Gruen Transfer'; thinking person's comedian Wil Anderson had yet to write a single word towards his new show, 'Wilful Misconduct'. And so, Anderson reveals his approach to writing a whole hour of material that he will debut here in Adelaide.

"So far all I've written for it is the title on a manilla folder and a blank piece of paper," shrugs Anderson, nonchalantly, "so writing the rest of it should be easy from here on," he suggests. "It's over the next six weeks that it will all come together because I've just spent the last six weeks

having a think about what exactly I want to talk about," discloses Anderson, "and I think that can be the hardest thing because once you know how to do comedy the technical skills are essentially the same.

"It's like when you go to cooking school," he offers the analogy. "Everyone

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knows how to cut up a carrot and how to boil it, but what makes a great meal so exciting? It's not just the ingredients you choose but the way you choose to combine them. And I think comedy's a bit like that, but quite often you skimp on the important bit which is thinking before you start, you know?" he considers, with an advising tone in his voice. "You start writing and then you get trapped into what you've written rather than having really having a decent think about it before you start. But if you don't think, you end up writing the same show over and over."

When actually written, 'Wilful Misconduct' will be Anderson's fifteenth show, all of which contained a play on words with his Christian name in their titles: 'Wilosophy', 'Wil Of Fortune', 'Wil By Mouth' and, my personal favourite, 'I Am The Wilrus' etc.

"I'm really proud of that," Anderson boasts of his consistent annual turn out, "because my attitude is if you write a new show every year then you'll have a career in comedy," he says. "And that may sound like a lot, and it feels like a lot to me when I do it," he admits of the seemingly easy task's actual difficulty. "But, if you really break it down, and this is what I say to new comedians, it's only two minutes a week. If you write two minutes of comedy a week and then you throw out one of those minutes, assuming that half of it's shit, you would then have a new show every year," he confidently advises. "Obviously that's a real simplistic way of looking at it," he avows, "but if you're saying that something is your career or your passion you can come up with two minutes a week. I mean, if you're doing radio shows

you'd churn through myriads of material. I can joke about things today and might never ever think about them again because they're immediate. You have fun with things and then you just let them go, you know?" he tells me. "So I guess what I've tried to do with my stand up is to leave that as a space to talk about things that I feel more passionate about or don't want to be disposable or flippant."

Despite deadlines looming, Anderson is showing little sign of the pressure upon him. "Someone once said to me that if people are going to take time out of their lives," he casually outlines his situation, "maybe get a babysitter, pay for parking and outlay money for tickets just to sit in a room to see what you have to say, then you may as well have something to say," he asserts. "As gooey as that sounds, it's actually a real gift and people are coming to see you do something everyone else does everyday for free," he admits. "We are just talking and communicating ideas, so if you expect someone to pay you money for something that everyone else does for free then you'd better be good at it.

"Like, if you go to see someone play the violin or dance ballet not everyone can do that or you don't normally see people dancing ballet in your everyday normal life, but people talk and try to be funny to you every day. I think there's a responsibility to the craft and although it doesn't always work out, as long as you're trying to do your best then that's what is important."

Wil Anderson's 'Wilful Misconduct' plays at The Spiegeltent until Sat 13 March