Introduction

Oliver Double

Form

On his 1959 album *The Future Lies Ahead*, Mort Sahl describes the performance he is giving as 'a primitive form of theatre'.[1] Although stand-up comedy is rarely thought of as theatre, Sahl's description rings true. Stand-up comedy is one of the simplest and most popular forms of theatre in existence. Famously, Peter Brook wrote that 'all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged' is for somebody to walk across an empty space while someone else is watching.[2] Superficially, there is little more to stand-up than that: a single performer walks onto the stage, talks to the audience, and walks off again.

Of course, behind that apparent simplicity there is a lot going on which might be unacknowledged or taken for granted. Tony Allen, a pioneer of the British alternative comedy scene, wrote that the stand-up comedian 'walks onstage relatively naked. He speaks directly to the audience in the first person. There is no contract, only a nebulous agreement that the performance is spontaneous and authentic. Even though the set-piece jokes, skits and monologues may be learned word for word, the audience will overlook any deceit so long as they get to laugh and feel included.'[3]

This is useful in helping to pin down the core elements that define stand-up as a theatre form. First, it centres on the identity of the performer themself. The comedian typically performs 'in the first person', without adopting any obvious character. There is a sense of self-revelation – hence being 'relatively naked' – and this creates a feeling of authenticity.

Second, the comedian 'speaks directly to the audience'. There is no fourth wall separating stage from auditorium, and the audience plays a crucial role, validating the performance with their tangible reactions – laughter, applause, heckling, and so on. At the end of a show recorded in the late 1950s, Shelley Berman thanks his audience directly for their part in the show, acknowledging, 'But I can't be funny without you. Alone,

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I'm *not funny*. In my bathroom, for example, where I'm as *alone as I can be* – I'm not *funny*. I may *look* a little strange but I'm not funny. [laughter]'[4] What Berman is acknowledging here is that without an audience, the performance would be incomplete. The size and nature of the audience might differ dramatically. The first audience Maria Bamford performs to in her 2017 Netflix special *Old Baby* consists of just her husband and their dog.[5] At the other end of the scale, according to Guinness World Records, the biggest stand-up audience ever happened on 12 July 2008, when 67,733 people assembled at Berlin's Olympiastadion to watch the German comedian Mario Barth. In both cases though, the aim remains the same – to get the audience to laugh.

Third, even though the material might be more or less fixed, it has to at least appear to be 'spontaneous'. Unlike a play, it is comparatively rare for stand-up material to be written down word for word, and there is always the possibility of improvisation. As Lenny Bruce told Studs Terkel in 1959, 'I don't actually sit down and write out a routine. I'll ad-lib it on the floor, but line by line, and eventually it'll snowball into a bit. I'll never actually do the same routine twice.'[6]

History

It is not easy to say exactly when, where, and how stand-up came into existence. The earliest known usage of the term 'stand-up comedian' occurs in an article about a musical comedian called Finlay Dunn in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* in 1917,[7] referring to the form his act had taken years earlier than that. The term didn't come into common usage until the second half of the twentieth century, by which time the theatre form itself was well established.

Some accounts trace its origins to the USA in the nineteenth century in blackface minstrel shows, vaudeville theatre, and public appearances by the author Mark Twain. By about 1900, arguably the most popular type of vaudeville act was the 'monologist', which was defined by Joe Laurie Jr as '[a] man or woman who does an act depending entirely on talk; using no foils, stooges, musical instruments, songs or dancing'.[8] Other accounts place stand-up's origins in the music halls of the UK, with comic song evolving into comic patter in the late nineteenth century and becoming 'front cloth comedy' in twentieth-century variety theatres.

In both American and British traditions, there were distinct stages to stand-up's development. Following its early development in theatrical forms which presented a series of unconnected acts, it then moved out

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of theatres and into less formalised venues. In America, after vaudeville's demise, stand-up found new homes in a varied array of venues, including the Chitlin' Circuit, the Borscht Belt hotels in the Catskills, the showrooms of Las Vegas, and nightclubs across the country. In Britain, once the variety theatres disappeared, working men's clubs became the main location of stand-up comedy. This change of location led to a simplification of the form, with smartly dressed comedians telling standard gags from a shared stock of material.

Following this second phase, both America and Britain saw a radical reinvention of stand-up in the mid-to-late twentieth century, establishing an informal, individual style, more firmly rooted in the performer's personal biography. In the USA, this transformation was instigated in the 1950s and 1960s by performers such as Mort Sahl, Lenny Bruce, Dick Gregory, Phyllis Diller, and Joan Rivers, labelled at the time as 'sick comedians'. These comics were part of the inspiration for the UK's alternative cabaret movement of the 1980s, which effected a similar transformation, establishing a new circuit of venues in which performers such as Alexei Sayle, Tony Allen, Pauline Melville, Rik Mayall, and French and Saunders challenged the existing stylistic and political conventions of UK stand-up.

A strikingly similar – if less acknowledged – origin story can be found in Australia. Australian vaudeville theatres produced 'patterologists', solo comedians who performed 'material that was strong on satire, highly parochial and often written the day it was performed',[9] and solo patter-based comedians went on to thrive in variety shows after World War I. Australia's equivalent of the British working men's clubs were the licenced clubs of New South Wales and Queensland. In the second half of the twentieth century, these were home to a breed of stand-ups described by Rod Quantock as 'joke "borrowing" suit and tie types'.[10]

Quantock was a key figure in the evolution of Australian stand-up, taking an approach to performance that would prefigure and inspire the radical reinvention of the form. He emerged from the Melbourne cabaret scene of the 1970s, where he developed his solo comedy routines as part of the Razzle Dazzle Revue. Fellow Razzle Dazzle performer Mary Kenneally claims that Quantock 'kind of invented' the modern style of Australian stand-up: 'There wasn't anybody but Rod … there wasn't that direct talk.'[11] Quantock's loosely structured performances saw him talking directly to the audience and rooting his act in his own perspective on the world: 'There was nobody here who wrote comedy in any contemporary way at the time … I just got up and talked … I'd get up and tell a

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15-minute, 20-minute story about an event in my life … so that's what I was doing, autobiographical stuff.'[12]

By the 1980s, the opening of venues such as the Comedy Café's Banana Lounge and the Last Laugh's Le Joke were more conducive to small-scale performance and thus encouraged a wave of solo stand-ups to follow in Quantock's wake. Something similar was happening in Sydney, with the opening of the Comedy Store. The way the Australian stand-up scene developed in the 1980s closely mirrored the UK's alternative cabaret scene happening at the same time, but this parallel evolutionary process was happening more through coincidence than crosspollination. When John Pinder brought British alternative cabaret group the Bouncing Czecks over to play at the Last Laugh in 1984, lead singer Richard Piper was amazed to discover a thriving comedy scene in Melbourne: 'It was quite stunning to discover all this was happening 12,000 miles from Britain and that it had been going on for over ten years without any of us knowing about it.'[13]

When the Melbourne International Comedy Festival was launched in 1987, it not only established links with comedy scenes in other countries but also made Australian comedy much more visible around the world. Today, Australia has a stand-up scene that spreads right across the country. Andrew McClelland, who started performing stand-up around the beginning of this century, explains: 'There's scenes in every city and in some towns as well … In every capital city there are scenes. And then in smaller cities like Wagga Wagga or Castlemaine … there is a lot of stand-up in Australia.'[14]

Global Spread

Notably, the parallel evolution of stand-up comedy in the USA, the UK, and Australia has happened in predominantly English-speaking countries. These are probably the countries where stand-up has existed the longest – each with a tradition of well over a century – so it would be tempting to see it as essentially an anglophone theatre form.

However, if this was once true it is certainly no longer so. The last twenty to thirty years has seen stand-up spread across the globe surprisingly quickly, with national scenes cropping up across Europe, Africa, the Middle East, South and East Asia, and Central and South America. The only continent to lack a vibrant stand-up scene is Antarctica. In the last few years, the British and American comedy industries have started to pick up on stand-up's global spread. UK comedy promoter Mick Perrin brought over comedians from Italy, France, Germany, and Russia to play the 2014

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Edinburgh Fringe, as well as promoting comedy shows across Europe and in South Africa. BBC comedy producer Ed Morrish devised a show called *Welcome to Wherever You Are* for Radio 4 (2016–2019), in which Andrew Maxwell compèred comedians from around the world performing from their own countries to a live audience in the UK via a video link. In 2019, Netflix released a series called *Comedians of the World* featuring half-hour sets from stand-ups who are French, French-Canadian, English-Canadian, Saudi Arabian, Palestinian, Jordanian, Mexican, Brazilian, Dutch, German, Indian, South African, Australian, New Zealander, American, and British.

The fact that Netflix have picked up on the globalisation of stand-up is telling, because video streaming is one of the factors that helped it spread to countries around the world in the first place. Ed Morrish points out the significance of the fact that video streaming allows content to be viewed internationally: 'It's the ability of people to watch stand-up all over the place that has really fuelled a sort of simultaneous spread of comedy all across the world. It's not all these countries developing their own cultures of stand-up. It's, "Oh, we can all get on YouTube and watch clips, and we can all get Netflix."'[15] He recalls Brazilian comedian Nil Agra telling him he was inspired by seeing Chris Rock and Dave Chappelle on Netflix. Similarly, Gursimran Khamba has acknowledged that Canadian comedian Russell Peters' popularity on YouTube helped to inspire the Indian stand-up scene. The Indonesian Muslim comedian Sakdiyah Ma'ruf – who fearlessly jokes about issues such as Islamic extremism – lists Sarah Silverman, Margaret Cho, and Ellen DeGeneres among her influences, naming Louis CK as her favourite stand-up.

However, streaming footage of stand-up is not enough in itself to engender comedy industries in countries new to the form. Janet A McLeod – who runs Melbourne's Local Laughs, the 'longest running stand-up room with one solitary operator in Australia' – points out that a 'scene doesn't just come out of nowhere. You've got to have people supporting it, you've got to have that framework.'[16]

The particular way that frameworks are established to support comedy scenes differs from country to country. Scandinavia has several long-established stand-up scenes, and according to Norwegian stand-up Anders Olsen, the key moment in Norway's scene was when Jånni Kristiansen opened the first stand-up club there, Reis Deg Komikerklubb, in 1994.[17] Romanian comedian Radu Isac pinpoints the exact moment that Romania's scene sprang into existence: 'It started in a tea bar in 2003 as a workshop for actors. Three people who were on in the first night are still

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professional comedians today.'[18] Indian comedian Anuvab Pal recognises the importance of Don Ward opening a branch of the Comedy Store in Mumbai in 2010: 'I think the big moment was when the Comedy Store of London opened the Comedy Store in Mumbai. It sort of institutionalised a very fragmented kind of, essentially, theatre that existed … the idea of writing your own narrative kind of formalised when the Comedy Store showed up in India.'[19]

In some cases, a single organisation has managed to introduce stand-up to a new country. Louis Zezeran is an Australian who moved to Estonia via Sweden and Finland. Having performed stand-up in both of those Nordic countries, he decided to start running shows in Estonia. He recalls: 'Because there was nothing here, I understood we essentially needed to construct an industry end-to-end … So we became very independent. Almost until very recently, we did everything on our own.'[20] His Comedy Estonia organisation finds new talent by running open mic nights, staging professional stand-up shows, and mounting tours by the biggest comedians, as well as managing its artists.

It is important to acknowledge that when stand-up scenes spring up, they are sometimes preceded by an earlier performance tradition with similar qualities. For example, Liisi Laineste has shown how the recent stand-up scene in Estonia was preceded by a similar comic tradition that had been introduced in the 1960s during Soviet rule: *estrada*.[21] Similarly, despite stating that Romanian stand-up dates back to 2003, Radu Isac points out that '[o]bviously we had comedy before. A lot of it was monologues that would be indistinguishable from stand up today … I'm pretty sure we've had "stand up" in Romania way before we had recording equipment and way before Romania was a country.'[22]

In fact, these earlier performance traditions are often easily distinguishable from stand-up today. Olga Mesropova argues that Russia's stand-up tradition stretches back to the 1930s, but acknowledges that it is different from its 'Western counterpart', displaying a 'literary orientation' in that 'comics read their monologues directly from a script and rarely resort to improvisation'.[23] Dutch comedian Rayen Panday explains: 'The theatre form that was here before stand up, but looks most like it, is called Cabaret. It started around the 1890s as far as I know. It is more storytelling, more theatre with acting and/or music and less interactive.'[24] Belgium has a similar tradition, and the difference between cabaret and stand-up struck Nigel Williams, who has a successful stand-up career there – performing in Dutch – but originally comes from Bristol:

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> The thing is, you had a culture here of the French-style *cabaret*. It'd be a guy or a woman coming onstage – and it used to get on my nerves 'cos they talk for about ten minutes without a laugh. And then they usually have, halfway through, a little bit on the piano where they sing a song and everybody has to cry. And then they tell a little bit more story and you can laugh now and again.

It was the late 1990s when Williams first saw stand-up in Belgium, in a form he recognised from the UK: 'I was just in a bar and I thought, "Hey, these guys are doing stand-up comedy".'[25]

Language

Despite these earlier traditions, the modern stand-up scenes springing up in countries around the world betray their origins in anglophone countries in the words they use to name the form. In France it is *le stand-up*, in Italy *la stand-up comedy*, in German *die Stand-up-Comedy*, in Finland *stand up-komiikka*, in Sweden *ståuppkomik*, in Russia стендап-комедия (*stendap-komediya*), and in Hindi स्टैंड-अप कॉमेडी (*staind-ap komedee*). Louis Zezeran recalls that when he kick-started stand-up into existence in Estonia, one of the things he needed to do was 'to name the art form' because, 'There's no word in Estonian … So we decided on, in Estonian, *stand-up koomik*. Which is, *koomik* is Estonian for comic. But we kept the *stand-up*, because I looked around at different countries … and every country had some derivation of stand-up … and it was like, "We want to be cool internationals".' In fact, the Estonian Language Inspectorate chose a different word, *püstijalakomöödia*. However, according to Zezeran, *stand-up komöödia* has become 'more colloquially accepted'.[26]

Stand-up's anglophone origins can also be seen in the fact that some non-anglophone countries initially use English as the language to perform in. English-language stand-up is still popular across Scandinavia, for example. At first, stand-up was performed in English in Comedy Estonia's shows. Louis Zezeran explains why:

> So when we started in Estonia, only ten years ago, the people accepted English before Estonian. There was sort of some cultural disbelief that stand-up and this sort of humour could work in their own language. And well, OK, we started the first shows in English … it took a couple of years and then the Estonians started to step up and we realised … it works fine in Estonian. There's actually no grammatical reason why it couldn't. And then that kind of took over … One of the big moments for us was a guy called Sander Õigus came along, and he's now probably the most popular comedian in the country … and he was very committed to Estonian-language stand-up.[27]

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However, in countries where a range of languages is commonly spoken, switching between more than one of them can be a useful performance tool. For example, there are eleven official languages in South Africa, but English is widely spoken and is the preferred language for business and government. South African comedian Tats Nkonzo switches between languages in his act. He explains that 'when you speak in someone's language, you've already won their hearts over. It's one of the tricks that we use here. Even if you don't speak the language, you greet the person in their language – and already their hearts are a little bit more open to you.'[28] Ed Morrish remembers Nkonzo giving a slightly different reason for language-switching: '[T]hey speak English. But then you do the punchlines in your native language. Which undercuts it in sort of status, but also makes it a bit exclusionary – to the English[-speaking] people. Like, the bosses can't understand us.'[29]

A similar pattern exists in the Indian Hinglish stand-up scene, in which performers use a mixture of Hindi and English. On one level, this reflects how the performers speak in their offstage lives, as Aman Deep acknowledges: 'That's how we talk you know, with friends.'[30] Similarly, after starting performing in English, Amit Tandon now uses Hinglish because, 'It's how I usually speak. Comedy works best when you are yourself on stage.'[31] Thus, Hinglish helps to create the feeling of intimacy and authenticity which stand-up requires.

On another level, switching from English to Hindi is a useful performance technique, signalling a shift from formality to informality. Anuvab Pal has a joke which precisely plays on the different connotations of English and Hindi in terms of class and status. In it, he describes 'a certain kind of Indian person' who thinks English is superior because of 'postcolonial nostalgia for Britain' and has 'an assumption that people in Britain speak English in a certain Victorian sort of way'. He shows this character going to London and being thrown by encountering the way English is actually spoken in the UK:

> [T]he character I have is sort of somewhere right outside the Victoria and Albert Museum asking for directions. And he's confused because various accents are coming into play. So I try and do different sort of British accents. And he can't understand what the directions are and then finally sort of his colonial thing is just wiped off his face. And then he thinks to himself, *'Yeh kya bol raha hai?'* So the punchline is in Hindi. And the line is, 'What the hell is he saying?' … and then he has to confront the fact that he can't understand these accents … but that 'What the hell is this guy saying?' can only work in Hindi … and then that gets a big laugh because I'm

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> referring to a certain kind of elite Indian person, who's sort of unmasked, if you will, for an Indian audience, who really enjoy that. Because, you know, nobody likes posh, arrogant people.[32]

Pal argues that Hindi's informal connotations mean that the Hindi-speaking stand-up scene is India's biggest:

> [I]n India the biggest comedians will perform in Hindi. It's just most relatable, it's what everybody'll understand … The big stadium comedians and the auditorium comedians are all Hindi comedians. They're the really large comedians in India, because they are, you know, mass market … imagine if Michael McIntyre's main asset was that the *language* was different. And *that* is what made him relatable, right?[33]

On the other hand, in another linguistic context it is English that allows comedians to let their hair down and share intimate experiences. Vietnamese comedian Phuc performs in English because, 'In Vietnam, swearing and [talking] about sex is very taboo, and the language is designed in such a way that if you talk about it, it's very awkward. When you swear it's different. When you talk about sex, it's very weird.'[34]

'What's Happening Here?'

Because stand-up is such a simple theatre form – and because it has such a long tradition in Britain, North America, and Australia – it can be easy for audiences based in these countries to mistakenly assume it is a universal type of performance. However, when it arrives in a country with no previous tradition of it, it can seem strange and unfamiliar. When Louis Zezeran was looking for a venue to run his first shows in Estonia, the bar owners he spoke to were often confused when he tried to explain stand-up to them: 'In Tallinn, they were like, "What is this? What, do you want to step on a coffee table or something? This is weird".'[35]

Audiences can find the form of stand-up similarly confusing, and sometimes need it to be explained to them. Anuvab Pal states, 'I remember when the Comedy Store started [in Mumbai], people would often shout, you know, "What is going on?" Like, "Is something going to begin after this?" They just couldn't comprehend that *that* was the thing. And others were laughing. So there was a lot of, "What's happening here?".'[36] Janet A McLeod remembers producer Toby Sullivan telling her about seeing a stand-up showcase in Kuala Lumpur: 'And he said it was so interesting because basically the host came out and … described what stand-up was – "And they'll be telling you these stories from their own life, and they're not characters, and blah-blah-blah." And then the show began.'[37]

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Stand-up's informality, directness, and emphasis on comedians presenting themselves in the first person – sharing what are more or less their actual experiences and opinions – can be hard for audiences unfamiliar with the form to understand. As Anuvab Pal explains, it was this that confused some among the first audiences at the Mumbai Comedy Store:

> Everything in India, just to be a little careful, is usually melodramatic and heightened and kind of like the films. It sort of works its way around reality. But here, to have a person say, 'This is my age and I'm divorced and I'm this and I'm that' … That kind of honesty never existed, that artform did not exist. So the Comedy Store allowed people to discover their own voice, and kind of allowed us to ask, 'What do we think about things?', which was very uncommon in a culture like ours … Not because there is a certain institutionalised repression of it, but because it just didn't exist.[38]

What stand-up's global spread reveals, then, is the particularity – even peculiarity – of a form that imitates everyday conversation, with comedians sharing the intimate details of their lives with a roomful of strangers, and audiences replying with their laughter.

This Book

Starting this book with an account of stand-up comedy's global spread might seem a quirky choice given that – in the UK at least – it has received little media attention. Instead, popular discourse has been dominated by other aspects of stand-up – for example, the impact of 'culture wars' and the #MeToo movement, the growth of arena comedy, the rise of the so-called dead dad show, the enormous success of Hannah Gadsby's *Nanette*, the devastating effects of coronavirus on the comedy industry, and the sudden emergence of online performances on platforms such as Zoom. All of these are covered here, and it is important to recognise that they have happened in the wider context of stand-up becoming a truly global theatre form.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I situates stand-up in time and place. There are chapters on stand-up's history in the UK and the USA, while others examine the venues in which live stand-up takes place and how it has adapted to the recorded form, from radio to Netflix. Part II focuses on interpretation and meaning, looking at how stand-up reflects different aspects of identity as well as the ethics and politics of the form. Chapters on identity discuss the importance of performers who are female, LBGT+, Black, Jewish, or disabled. Others tackle debates around offensiveness in stand-up and the politics of the form in terms of both content and organisation. Part III examines the performance dynamics of

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stand-up, with chapters on the role of audiences, how a comic persona is constructed from elements of the performer's offstage self, and how stand-up can deal with personal trauma.

The contributing authors are a diverse group, based in six different countries and representing a range of disciplines, including theatre, media, communications, folklore, English literature, social and cultural anthropology, sociology, linguistics, American studies, and Africana studies. Three of them have worked professionally as stand-up comedians, and others have been involved in professional comedy in other ways, for example as professional reviewers or by running workshops.

Scattered between the different parts of the book, there are a series of short statements by stand-up comedians from nine different countries, articulating thoughts about their own work and the craft of stand-up more generally. These offer a different perspective on stand-up, giving a performer's-eye view which emphasises creative processes more than critical interpretation. The comedians who generously shared their thoughts reflect on how they write or devise their material, how they prepare to go onstage, the performance techniques they use, the audiences they attract, the stage personas they adopt, and their motivation for becoming stand-ups in the first place.

Notes

1. Mort Sahl, *The Future Lies Ahead* [LP] (USA: Verve Records, 1959).
2. Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1972), p. 11.
3. Tony Allen, *Attitude: Wanna Make Something of It?* (Glastonbury: Gothic Image, 2002), p. 28.
4. Shelley Berman, *The Edge of Shelley Berman* [LP] (USA: Verve Records, 1960).
5. Maria Bamford, *Old Baby* (USA: Netflix, 2017).
6. Kitty Bruce (ed.), *The Unpublished Lenny Bruce* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 1984).
7. 'Stage Gossip', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 10 November 1917, p. 3. For more on this, see Oliver Double, 'The Origin of the Term "Stand-Up Comedy" – Update', *Comedy Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2018: pp. 135–137.
8. Joe Laurie Jr, 'Monologists', *Variety*, 29 December 1931, p. 22.
9. Richard Harris, *Punch Lines: Twenty Years of Australian Comedy* (Sydney: ABC Books, 1994), p. 3.
10. Rod Quantock, email, 20 February 2022.
11. Mary Kenneally, interview with Oliver Double, by Zoom, 14 February 2022. Kenneally is an important comic performer in her own right, particularly known for her comedy character Debbie, which she performed in the 1980s TV show *Australia You're Standing in It*. She is also married to Quantock.

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12. Rod Quantock interview.
13. Harris, *Punch Lines*, p. 106.
14. Andrew McClelland interview, by Zoom, 31 January 2022.
15. Ed Morrish interview, by Zoom, 7 April 2022.
16. Janet A. McLeod interview, by Zoom, 2 February 2022.
17. Anders Olsen email, 23 January 2022.
18. Radu Isac email, 16 June 2022.
19. Anuvab Pal interview, Camden, 7 April 2022.
20. Louis Zezeran interview, by Zoom, 27 January 2022.
21. Liisi Laineste, 'Stand-Up in Estonia: From Soviet *estrada* to Comedy Estonia', in L. Laineste, D. Brzozowska, and W. Chłopicki (eds), *Creativity and Tradition in Cultural Communication, Volume 1, Jokes and Their Relations* (Tartu: ELM Scholarly Press, 2012), pp. 73–90.
22. Radu Isac email.
23. Olga Mesropova, 'Stand-Up Comedy', in Tatiana Smorodinskaya, Karen Evans-Romaine, and Helena Goscilo (eds), *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture* (London: Routledge, 2014) p. 293.
24. Rayen Panday email, 3 March 2022.
25. Nigel Williams interview, by Zoom, 28 January 2022.
26. Louis Zezeran interview, by Zoom, 27 January 2022.
27. Louis Zezeran interview.
28. *Welcome to Wherever You Are*, BBC Radio 4, 7 December 2017.
29. Ed Morrish interview.
30. Zubin Miller, 'Stand-Up Comedy and Young India: The Expression and Construction of Identity', *Changing English*, Vol. 27, No. 4, 2020: p. 452.
31. Manali Shah, 'Why an Increasing Number of Stand-Up Comedians Are Choosing to Talk in Hindi', *Hindustan Times*, 23 March 2017.
32. Anuvab Pal interview, by Zoom, 10 May 2022.
33. Anuvab Pal interview, Camden.
34. Jwyanza Hobson, 'How Vietnamese Stand-Up Comics Juggle Culture, Identity and Language on Stage', *Saigoneer*, 14 January 2018.
35. Louis Zezeran interview.
36. Anuvab Pal interview, Camden.
37. Janet A. McLeod interview.
38. Anuvab Pal interview, Camden.

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