

ALEX HORNE - TASKMASTER

He's not just a nice guy who does semi-educational comedy shows about mildly eccentric subjects. In his free time, ALEX HORNE is the Taskmaster.

It all started last August when he was at home, looking after a baby instead of playing at the Festival. Frustrated and desperate for fun, he contacted twenty of his favourite comedians and persuaded them to take part in a covert competition. They didn't know whom they were competing against, what they might win or why they should bother – but they all agreed.

For the next year ALEX set these unquestioning comics a series of monthly tasks; some big, some small, some sneaky, some silly. He instructed them to put on weight, predict the future and look after eggs. Some played fair. Some tried to cheat. They all did their best. They all wanted to win.

This underground and increasingly aggressive contest ends with a one-off show at the Edinburgh Festival. With as many of the competitors as possible on stage with him, ALEX will tell the tales, question the tactics and relate the results. Photographic and video evidence will be produced and extra tasks will be set. It could get ugly. But eventually a winner will be crowned.

So who will be the Taskmaster's Master of Tasks: DAN ATKINSON? TOM BASDEN? JARRED CHRISTMAS? JAMES DOWDESWELL? RICK EDWARDS? TIM FITZHIGHAM? STUART GOLDSMITH? STEVE HALL? TIM KEY? LLOYD LANGFORD? JOSIE LONG? GUY MORGAN? AL PITCHER? MARK OLVER? MARK WATSON? HENNING WEHN? JOE WILKINSON? LLOYD WOOLF? MIKE WOZNIAK? Or TOM WRIGGLESWORTH?

We'll all find out on August 27th.

ends

Praise for Alex Horne:

"The future of British comedy."

Shortlist

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Venue: Pleasance Queen Dome
Date: 27th August
Time: 00:20
Box Office: 0131 556 6550

For more information and press tickets, please contact: Ben Nolan, Fran Cherry, Bea Gwynn, Jo Cross or Dan Lloyd. Tel: 08700 70 50 50 [Edinburgh office] or 020 7598 7222 [London office]. Email: benn@avalonuk.com, franc@avalonuk.com, joc@avalonuk.com, beag@avalonuk.com or danl@avalonuk.com

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WHAT THE PRESS HAS SAID ABOUT...

...WORDWATCHING

"Beautifully structured, endearingly honest... He not only entertains, amuses and impresses, but he makes you want to join in. Don't be a pratdigger, go and see this show."

Kate Copstick, The Scotsman

"A gentlemanly sort with a potentially impressive handlebar moustache, he displays a meticulousness bordering on obsession. Neither this, nor his love of sophisticated software, hinders or distracts from his rolling flow... Take the tech away and you'd still have a tautly written, charmingly delivered show... This is almost word perfect."

Mickey Noonan, Metro

"Quirky, candid and engaging."

Suzanne Black, The List

"This is enormously captivating fun, with strong timing and brilliant humour. Well worth the honk."

Ian Phillips, The National Student

"A master of the gentle, charming comedy set."

The List

"It's an admirably pointless task, and one that's amusingly told. He deserves kudos for originality, too, as you don't get many stand-up shows dedicated to neologisms these days... Worth a few quid of anybody's honk."

Steve Bennett, Chortle

"A refreshingly honest set of fun and games will have you honking for more!"

Paul McInnes, Guardian Online

"Alex Horne's comedy stand up is a distinctive mix of the geeky and the quietly rebellious. He's obsessed with words and how we use them, has a penchant for puns and is a virtuoso of the vowel and consonant... This clever show works on several levels and its enthusiasm for words is infectious."

William McEvoy, The Stage

"This is concept comedy in the vein of Dave Gorman: a gentle, feelgood exploration of one man's unusual pursuit, which successfully keeps the audience intellectually stimulated as well as amused... you will be tickled, intrigued and perhaps even inspired to join in – which has got to be well worth your honk."

Tom Hackett, Fest

"Alex Horne's show Wordwatching is an amusing account of his quest to introduce various new words and usages into the English language... It's a show worth a few quid of anyone's hard-earned honk."

Ian Shuttleworth, Financial Times

...Birdwatching

"Rather like a rare bird - his ostensible subject - he is a fragile delight, covering any subject with a daft, surreal charm."

Stephen Armstrong, The Sunday Times

"Much more of a progressively inclusive family comedy than your typical stand up, and the feel good factor is unrivalled... It's well worth your while witnessing Horne's sharp eye, quick wit and excellent audience rapport, as he effortlessly moves the boundaries of the genre itself."

Duska Radosavljevic, The Stage

"Quick, intelligent, and capable of generating wholesome laughs without falter."

Rupert Thomson, Fest

"Horne is as quick-witted and engaging as they come."

Nicholas Barber, The Independent on Sunday

"The gentle premise offers a platform for some sharp gags and surprisingly insightful Philosophising."

James Kettle, The Guardian

"The hobby is a springboard for apparent but expertly controlled chaos, delivered around his immaculately timed and surprisingly technological whimsy."

Stephen Armstrong, The Sunday Times

"Horne's wide-eyed appetite for knowledge shines through and uncovers the naturally ridiculous elements of his findings... And who on the Fringe can wield a better PowerPoint presentation?"

Brian Donaldson, The List

"Quirky, quick-witted and affable."

Dominic Maxwell, The Times

"Horne is that rarest of creatures, the funny geek. He has a scientist's curiosity coupled with the gentle humour and enthusiasm that characterises the best lecturers. Combining these traits with his beloved PowerPoint, Horne's show tells of the year he spent locked in polite Oedipal combat with his Dad seeing who could spot the most birds. It is charming, warm and cosy rather than packed with killer lines, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing."

Jonathan Trew, Scotland on Sunday

"Horne's observations are at once funny and fascinating."

Sharon Lougher, Metro

...When in Rome

"A beguiling blend of the smart and stupid...a real delight."

The Times

"This is the most inventive show I've seen this year."

The Observer

"Horne has superb timing and fascinating delivery... Pure comedy gold."

Metro

"A quick witted and genial comedian."

The Independent

...Every Body Talks

"A real delight."

Dominic Maxwell, The Times

"A subtly-structured piece of gentle genius which explores non-verbal communication, complete with pie charts, graphics and an odd picture of Ken Dodd."

Bruce Dessau, Evening Standard

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"One white male who really should have received a (Perrier) nomination is Alex Horne, who was a newcomer nominee last year and whose new show, Every Body Talks, is more ambitious in imagination and complexity. Stand-up purists may balk at the quantity of props, but this is the most inventive show I have seen this year."

Stephanie Merritt, The Observer

"The concept is ambitious, the execution delightful and the atmosphere charming. Put simply, Every Body Talks is unlike anything else you will see on the Fringe. Which is exactly why you should go."

Steve Bennett, Chortle

...Making Fish Laugh

"Extremely well-conceived and executed, this makes for a fine hour laughing about laughter."

Steve Jelbert, The Independent

"This delightfully daft lecture elevates him into a new league."

Bruce Dessau, Evening Standard

"Being blinded by science has rarely seemed this fun."

Nick Awde, The Stage

"This is a hugely impressive debut. Conditions for laughter at the fringe? Alex Horne's gig."

Alex O'Connell, The Times

ALEX HORNE

Alex Horne is an award winning comedian and star and co-creator (alongside TIM KEY and MARK WATSON) of BBC Four's comedy quiz show We Need Answers, who has established a reputation among critics, comics and audiences as a thoughtful and original stand-up, writer and solo performer.

Nominated for the *Perrier Best Newcomer Award* in 2003 for Making Fish Laugh, his interactive Edinburgh Festival Fringe debut stand-up show, he has brought five solo show to the Edinburgh Fringe, including 2004's *Chortle Award* winning Every Body Talks, and 2005's When In Rome which went on to be ALEX'S first national tour.

In 2007 ALEX performed Birdwatching to critical acclaim at the Fringe. The show went on to tour nationally in 2009 coinciding with the release of ALEX'S debut book Birdwatchingwatching (Virgin Books).

Alex's second book Wordwatching, based on his 2008 Edinburgh show, was released in January this year after which Alex embarked on a 35 date national tour. Additionally, 2010 has seen Alex film his own documentary for BBC Four 'The Games that Time Forgot: Cricket on Horseback and Other Forgotten Sports' and become a columnist for The Observer.

ALEX'S other recent credits include The Percy Edwards Showdown (BBC Radio 4), The Verb (BBC Radio Three) and Loose Ends (BBC Radio 4).

AVALON PROMOTIONS

Avalon Promotions Limited is one of the leading promoters of live comedy in the UK. Productions include: NEWMAN & BADDIEL in the first comedy show ever to be staged at Wembley Arena; FRANK SKINNER's record-breaking performance to an audience of 6,000 at the Battersea Power Station; Jerry Springer – The Opera at the National Theatre, at the Cambridge Theatre in London's West End, on national tour and at New York's Carnegie Hall; HARRY HILL at the Palace and Dominion Theatres in London; and Dave Gorman's Googlewhack Adventure at the Sydney Opera House, at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, on national tour and at the Village Theatre, New York (nominated for *Drama Desk Award 2004*).

The last 12 months has seen Avalon Promotions: present multi-award winning comics CHRIS ADDISON, SIMON BIRD, JENNY ECLAIR, DAVE GORMAN, RICHARD HERRING, RUSSELL HOWARD, LEE MACK, and FRANK SKINNER on sell-out runs; produce AL MURRAY, THE PUB LANDLORD live at the O2 and RUSSELL HOWARD at Wembley Stadium; introduce some of the fastest-rising stars in comedy such as KRISTEN SCHAAL & KURT BRAUNOHLER and ISY SUTTIE; produce stage shows, such as Frank Skinner's Credit Crunch Cabaret and Grumpy Old Women Live, which has toured the UK three times and performed highly successful runs in Australia and London's West End; and present 20 acts at the Edinburgh Festival, where it has promoted a total of five *Perrier Award* winners and 18 *Perrier Award/Edinburgh Comedy Award* nominees in just 21 years.

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