

Comedy knight



If you thought there was nothing funny about living in Bahrain, think again. Comedy on the archipelago is about to become massive, and it's all thanks to local radio host and entertainer **Imran Alaradi**

Comedy is a hard act to pull off. You can forgive a singer when their voice cracks or they hit the occasional wrong note. You feel sorry for a ballet dancer if she falls flat on her face. But for a comedian, one bad joke and the night is ruined. Comedy takes guts and nerves and a shed-load of self confidence. So if anyone was going to

Tour early in 2009. "They said to me, "You're going to have to be funny." Now, I've been using humour in my shows regardless, but when someone comes up to you and says that, that's when you panic.' Fortunately, he was a hit and has since been catapulted into the comedy circuit, with gigs across the region.

However, it wasn't until late last year that he decided to form Bahrain's first comedy production company. It was a call to arms to anyone who thought they were funny enough: 'I hosted auditions and said, "If you think you're funny, if you think you've got what it takes, then I am going to give you five to seven minutes on a stage in front of an audience.'" It was a gamble, but one that paid off. After a night of auditions he had a comedy team and the Arabian Knights of Comedy was born.

The surprising part was the variety of nationalities I had on stage. I didn't only have Bahrainis on stage: I had a Latin guy, I had an Omani guy, and I had a British guy: I had people all over the world. It was like a whole

festival and that was just the auditions. Some of the guys that performed looked like they had been doing stand-up comedy all their lives. There is a lot of talent out there that has never been given the opportunity to get on stage.'

The show itself attracted around

100 people, which might not be much when you compare it to the audience that some of the comic megastars play to, but in a country that has almost no history of being funny, it was a huge success. Alaradi said, "To me, that created history because people got on stage with no experience and performed as though they were pros, and the people loved them. When you see people you don't know at your show you know your marketing is working.'

And Alaradi is convinced that the scene is going to explode. "There's a huge market for comedy. A couple of years ago, the idea of local comedians would have been crazy. The point I am trying to prove, and already have, is that we do not need to bring talent from abroad, we have it all here. And comedy is vital to the mental state of the island. Its importance is a lot higher than we think it is.'

And the reception? "The audience told me the reason they enjoyed the show so much was because the their jokes were localised, and they related to that very well. They said, "You cannot find this kind of entertainment on the television or in the top 10 comedians internationally." And I thought about it and it's true.'

The Arabian Knights of Comedy has its next show planned for the new year. If you think you've got what it takes to make people laugh, get in touch with Imran Alaradi and book yourself in for the audition night, held two weeks before the event.

Imran Alaradi is the organiser of the Arabian Knights of Comedy. The next event is currently slated for late February. For more information, visit www.imranalaradi.com Imran also hosts a radio show on 96.5FM every Wednesday between 6pm and 9pm.

Nightlife

'Comedy is vital to the mental state of the island. Its importance is a lot higher than we think it is'

take the almost non-existent Bahrain comedy circuit and thrust it into full throttle, Imran Alaradi was.

Local radio host and seasoned entertainer, Alaradi's first taste of the comedy circuit was when he was asked to host the Axis of Evil Comedy

Setting the standards



We asked Imran to make us laugh

- **I am not fat... I just have soft muscles**
- **Driving in Bahrain: Nobody wants to move when the light is green and everyone starts racing when it's red! WHY?**
- **Requirements to be Bahraini: Arabic Language, the ability to finish a whole chicken and a huge plate of rice, two personal loans, at least two credit cards, a third personal loan to pay off the second one, an auto loan, and own a Honda Civic or a Toyota Corolla at least once in your life.**