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# Comedy Genius

October-December 2018 | Nationwide

## Creative brief

The BFI's blockbuster season for 2018 is the UK's greatest ever celebration of film and TV comedy – bringing the gift of laughter just when we need it most! From October to December the comedy geniuses of the big and small screen will be making us laugh at BFI Southbank and cinemas across the UK, online on BFI Player and with a wide range of UK partners.

Great comedy brings us together - there's no better feeling than crying with laughter together in the cinema – and our sense of humour can define who we are. It also challenges us to think, puncturing pomposity, blowing a raspberry at social convention and saying the unsayable.

Iconic work emerges from wide-ranging collaborations between writers, directors, actors and producers, and the greatest comedy talents often have a hand in all of these aspects of creative production. Comedy Genius focuses on those pre-eminent talents who are – or should be – celebrated by audiences for their distinctive on-screen performances.

BFI and FAN are working with today's most talented practitioners to spotlight the brightest stars of their craft, inviting audiences to discover classic works, and rescuing overlooked talents from obscurity. Covering everything from pioneer prat-fallers, and celebrated satirists to TV trailblazers and online superstars, we hope there's something here for everyone.

## Highlights for FAN members

- ★ Potential to 'scale up' your ideas with regional and National partners, aligning with wider activity
- ★ Touring package - 10 titles curated by the ICO, available to FAN members, with support available to enhance programming via major programmes funding
- ★ Theatrical re-releases of classic titles including: *Some Like it Hot* (1959), *9 to 5* (1980)
- ★ On screen talent, interviews and events across the UK
- ★ National campaign, assets with targeted support for regional and digital press
- ★ Support for special events & seasons through dedicated funding



## Why celebrate Comedy Genius?

Comedy Genius can open up a world of film heritage, connect with young people and champion diverse contemporary talent, all through the power of laughter.

A national campaign + FAN member's creativity will help this season put the spotlight on how comedy connects us, through UK-wide events and screenings. We are particularly keen to support projects that have the potential to scale or partner UK-wide

Addressing FAN priorities, in particular developing young audiences, heritage, diversity and collective viewing, support from major programmes will help members to:

- ❖ Encourage risk taking, support ambition and help new audiences discover the joy of big-screen laughs, through creative commissions, live events, curation, and debate
- ❖ Illuminate works that otherwise wouldn't get shown including archive, forgotten films, and under-exposed viewpoints
- ❖ Bring the small screen (TV, VOD and online) to cinema audiences, unearthing talent, and allowing for collective viewing of small screen works
- ❖ Champion new audiences/old titles - celebrating heritage with fun interactive events and contemporary contextualisation
- ❖ Discover rising stars at home and online and celebrate the diversity of UK and international comedy talent on screen today
- ❖ Support innovation in reaching new audiences through site specific events and outreach

## How can I get involved?

From village halls and stand-up nights to multi-screen cinemas and festivals, there's an opportunity for everyone to be part of Comedy Genius.

Funding is available to support a range of activity that fits the aims above, including:

- One off events and touring events
- New commissions

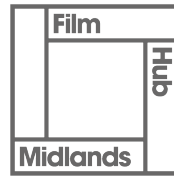


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- Access to the ICO screening tour + support for augmented activity
  - Fun events for families and community
  - Great nights out
  - Q&As and in-person interviews
  - Targeted marketing and PR activity
  - Support for accessible screenings within this season
  - Ring-fenced support for young programmers and activities for young people
  - Your own programming that extends the offer of your venue or festival, and meets the creative brief and aims

## Key themes

Framed by a focus on on-screen performers, the season has been designed to be open and inclusive, with scope for FAN venues and members to come up with their own imaginative spin on central themes. We also encourage you to look at local talent and regional specificity when planning your own activity.

- **Slapstick and Sight Gags:** the Genius of Physical Comedy: from Chaplin, Keaton to Jacques Tati and Rowan Atkinson
- **Rediscovering Mabel Normand:** legendary star of the silent era, frequent collaborator with Chaplin and Fatty Arbuckle, and producer, writer, director and power behind over 100 films
- **British Film & TV Comedy Geniuses:** celebrating the full range of talents from the nations and regions, and the eccentricity, surrealism, social ineptitude and smut that help define the British comedy tradition: Ealing to *Withnail*, *Carry On* to *Monty Python*.
- **Black Comedy pioneers:** such as Trix Worrell's *Desmonds*, the many, funny, faces of Donald Glover and madcap mavens from Moms Mabley to Whoopi Goldberg
- **Poking fun at politics, puncturing pomposity:** exploring the daring and political charge of Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* and Ernst Lubitsch's *To Be Or Not To Be*, highlighting comedy's part in writing history and political subversion and celebrating agents of Chaos: anarchists, maniacs and disruptive individuals from The Marx Brothers to Chris Morris
- **Trailblazing Women:** focusing attention on fiercely talented funny women who have changed the face of comedy from Lucille Ball to Issa Rae; Elaine May to Tina Fey; Jennifer Saunders to Michaela Coel; and celebrating the razor-sharp wit of screwball heroines of the 1930s and 40s like Katherine Hepburn, Carole Lombard and Barbara Stanwyck
- **Wise-cracks:** before *Deadpool* there was Eddie Murphy, Mae West and W C Fields
- **Stoner Comedy & Cult Classics:** *Airplane!* to *Spinal Tap*; *Stir Crazy* to *House Party*.
- **World of Comedy:** shedding light on less familiar international stars with a particular focus on European comedy



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- **All the LOLZ:** serving up the best online video to collective, cinema audiences - from established talents like Limmy to the next generation of stars

## Dates and deadlines

- ❖ Comedy Genius will run throughout October – December 2018 at BFI Southbank and across FAN
- ❖ Expressions of Interest for large scale projects (£1,000-30,000) open 25 June - 24 August
- ❖ Screening Support for smaller one-off events, short seasons & marketing (up to £1,000) open late July and running through to January 2019, in line with ICO bookings.

## Get involved

Visit <http://filmhub.broadway.org.uk/comedy-genius> to access guidelines and links to apply for funding.

## Contact

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