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EDINBURGH FRINGE (/FRINGE/) 2018

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[Daniel Sloss \(/people/daniel_sloss/\)](#) is 27, yet one of the most established acts at the Edinburgh Fringe, having started stand-up whilst still in his teens. This year he'll be performing 'X' - his 10th full-length show at the festival - at the big EICC venue. We interrupted one of his writing sessions to find out what his preparations are going, and talk about his [Netflix \(/guide/channel/netflix/\)](#) deal.

Hi Daniel. You've been performing at the Edinburgh Festival for over a decade now. Have you contemplated that statistic?

It's sort of weird to think about. I remember being pretty much forced into my first Fringe show. I want to do it because I didn't think I had the material. I didn't think I was ready and I wanted to do what most comics do; wait until I had a show that I thought could win an award, or something. But my manager was just like, "nah... you're doing one!"

Doing the Fringe is such a valuable experience, it's the equivalent of doing a year or two on the circuit. I didn't want to do my second one either actually - again, because I was like 'I don't know if I have enough new material', but she went "tough, you're doing it". But pretty much after that I was like, 'actually I do want to do this every year'... having the deadline and training yourself to do it is so valuable.

Does it get easier to prepare for as the years go on?

Oh, yeah. Like sometimes me and Kai Humphries (/people/kai_humphries/) - we do a lot of work together - we play with fire, just see how late we can leave it.

Last year we saw your first preview show and it was already slick...

Thank you very much. I can write the fucking material - I'm a good stand-up - but it's about getting the flow and making sure I know where to get the points in.

There's a vast difference between sitting in my dining room and writing jokes on a whiteboard and working on stage. The audience might laugh at something a bit more than laugh at something else, and then I can play with that.

It's a fun process. But there is a bit of worrying that people have paid to see the show and you want it to be as slick as possible, even when you're still writing and working on it and stuff; but I fucking love it.

You use a whiteboard in the writing process?

Whiteboards are more for working out the order, like running through bits and working out what flows into what.

Tom Stade (/people/tom_stade/) is phenomenal at it, and I absolutely stole the idea off him. I was in his house a couple of weeks ago and he would just write the first word of the 'bit' on a board. I'd write down punchlines, but he's the opposite - he'd write down the set then what that could go on to... and then you can keep adding to it. Kind of bullet point storytelling worked for me, so I'm like 'I'm absolutely having that method'.

Have you worked out the theme for this year's show yet?

Yeah. I've found it. You'll have to come and see the show to find out though.

My shows do tend to follow a theme, which is 45 minutes of solid stand-up and then 10 minutes of Q&A, here's my opinion'.



The Fringe delivers an interesting mix of audiences - people deliberately picking a particular audience and people taking a punt. Do you have any concept of how many people are your existing fanbase?

I've no idea what the percentage is, but I can work out who has never seen me before by the first few minutes of jokes.

The people that have seen me before know my style and know how I talk about things, and how I'm going to go, so they're willing to follow me on an idea. Occasionally you'll just see people 5 minutes in and I'll mention something or I'll swear or I'll say something that I clearly don't believe - and they're like "my god, does he actually mean that?"... those that are laughing are the ones that are like "obviously doesn't mean that, we've seen him before"...

You've been building up a following in America. Was it always a plan to crack the US?

It's not necessarily deliberate, it's more just logical. I grew up watching a lot of American stand-up and I like going over there. I want to do clubs, and there's so many great clubs over there.

I don't really care where I do stand-up as long as I get to do it. There's a big market in America and it appears to like what I do, so why not pursue it?

Some of your peers have tried to head Stateside too, but not had so much success yet. Romesh Ranganathan (/people/romesh_ranganathan/) for example had a gig that didn't sell many tickets. Do you have any thoughts why you've had success that others haven't?

Well, I mean, I'm white... and that helps! Romesh is a fucking stellar comedian and I think he's actually doing quite well. I'm a big big fan of Romesh and I like the way he's gone about it; that 'fuck you, anyway attitude'... that's very much an approach I can relate to.

I also think the fact that my accent is not particularly heavy, but it's still enough to be a novelty, but I think it's a similar style; I grew up watching stand-up from America and how they do it, and my style is similar: storytelling but heavy with punchlines.

You've appeared on the TV show *Conan* a notable number of times. That must have helped establish you Stateside too?

Absolutely.

I didn't want to start over again, again. I'd had to establish myself in Scotland, and then when I went to England and had to re-establish myself; then, when I started doing Australia, I had to re-establish myself and start again... so in America I was not going to start from the ground up [again]: I'm not doing mic nights, I don't have to prove myself to anyone. My history speaks for itself.

Thankfully the people at *Conan* and Warner Brothers were very supportive; they've been watching me for the years.

It was kind of like having a save point in a computer game actually. I got to skip the tutorial for a bit and got straight in the middle. I'm happy to fight for my place there, because that's where I belong, minimum.

Excitingly, you have two Netflix (</guide/channel/netflix/>) specials on the way...

Yah, that's a fucking huge deal. I was shocked and thrilled and emotional.

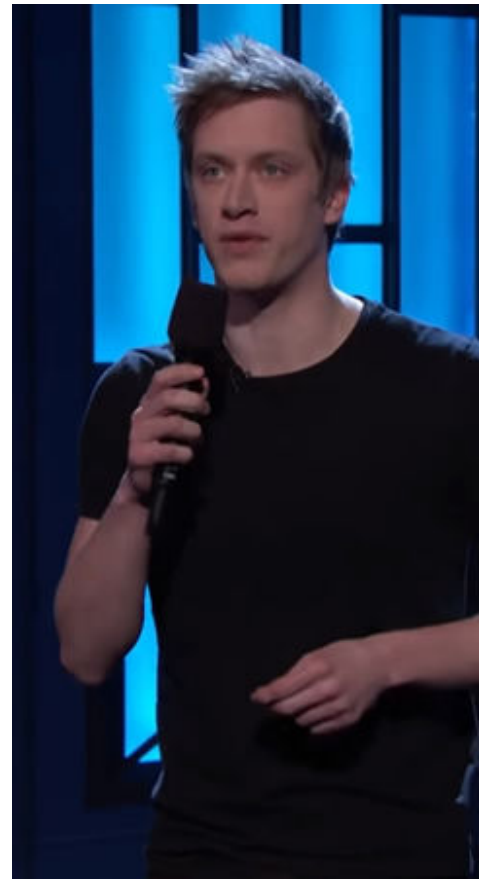
It's something we've been working on for four or five years and I never knew if it was ever definitely going to come through.

I'm thrilled because the only online stuff that's available of me now is either my shitty DVD, which I filmed when I was 21, so is all my younger material, or my TV spots. As great as they are it's still... what's the word? 'Censored'. *Conan* gave me a lot of freedom, but I'm used to longer form hour-long shows where I can get my personality across, talk about darker stuff, and use the language I enjoy using.

So I've been doing these tour shows and stuff for years and years and are more my voice, and people are like 'you're so different than you are online'. So, even if nothing comes from Netflix (</guide/channel/netflix/>), I'll just be happy a version of me that I'm happy with is out there.

How did you get the Netflix (</guide/channel/netflix/>) deal?

We filmed one before we even had a deal... we just filmed it to Netflix (</guide/channel/netflix/>) standard, and then Netflix (</guide/channel/netflix/>) bought it - then we filmed the other one with them. I wish it was my idea; my agent was very much 'let's just do it, and build it up, and then they can buy it if they want it'... and thankfully they did.



I was in an Eastern Europe [on tour] when I found out. That morning I'd been talking to my agent all the Netflix (</guide/channel/netflix/>) stuff and I was getting impatient because I'd waited four or five years, and she had promised me it was going to happen, and I was like 'look, if nothing happens end of this tour, I have to release this material myself'... then I went on stage and had a great gig. Two hours on stage, as I was having such fun. When I came off and she phoned me immediately, like 'my mum is dead, that's the only thing that fucking means!' And, yeah, then she told me we'd done the deal... I was emotional.

You clearly love performing Daniel. Do you think you'll still be on stage when you're 90?

I'll be well dead before then!

My heart lies in stand-up comedy, it's the thing I love doing most. It's the thing I love watching my friends do. I didn't get into stand-up as a stepping stone to do something else, I got into stand-up because I love it. I love this job, it's the greatest job in the world. I just want to be the best at it... and the only way that is to keep doing it over and over and over and over again.

Good answer! Er, if you're not going to live to 90, when do you think you will die?

My mum always got annoyed because I said I'd die at 27... I've now got about 2 months of that age left. Dunno, who wants to live to 90?

Let's hope not, but if the clock is ticking on this 27 prediction then that's not a great sales pitch for the tour that's supposed to follow Edinburgh!

Yeah, who knows, maybe the tour will never happen! But you might as well buy the tickets still, anyway it's potentially a little memento!

Ha ha. Thanks for your time Daniel.

Daniel Sloss: X is at the EICC at 7pm from 2nd to 26th August (not 13, 20). Info & Tickets [↗](#)

His international tour starts in October, with dates around the UK from November. Dates & ticket

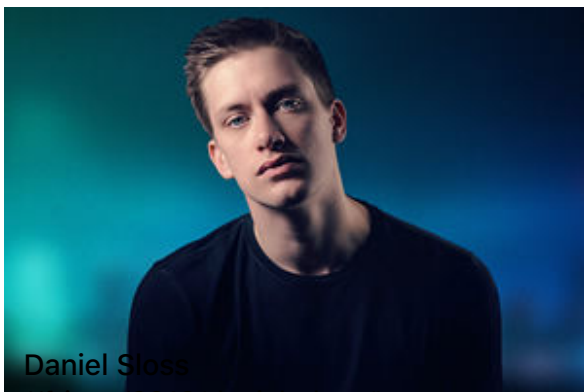


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