

Comedian Daniel Sloss revs up for drive-in shows

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Five months of not working has left the comedian Daniel Sloss itching for live performance. In a few days he finally gets his chance, in a giant car park by Brent Cross shopping centre in north London.

The Drive-In Club is a bold attempt to reunite artists with live audiences and Sloss, a trailblazer when he broke through on Scotland's club circuit as a teenager in 2007, is headlining the first night. It is quite an honour in a programme featuring Bill Bailey, Jason Manford and Rachel Parris among many of the most bankable names in comedy.

Contact with an audience, even across an enormous car park, will be a blessing, Sloss said, having spent lockdown at home in Edinburgh, gradually losing "all sense of self".

"Normally if you were to pitch a gig like this at me, it would be a nightmare," he said. "People outside, in cars, normally wouldn't work. But people have been starved of entertainment and they are saying, 'Anything!'"

"How many will I be able to interact with? I don't know, but these days even talking to your family face to face is a weird and exciting thing. The energy will be brilliant."

It is no surprise Sloss has been selected for these innovative shows. He completed a 300-date, 18-month world tour in December, following that with a three-week run in New York in January.

He already has two hour-long specials on Netflix and [his powerful show X](#) was made into an HBO special in America. Yet for [all his success abroad](#), Sloss has rarely appeared on British TV since his breakthrough.

When, thanks to Jimmy Carr, he appeared on *8 out of 10 Cats* he was "young and out of my depth". Though he believes there is another reason for his long absence from our screens: "A monopoly on TV shows in the British comedy industry."

Sloss, 29, said: "Look at the top comedy shows on British TV and you'll see. There are at least three [companies], they create their own TV show, and push their own acts through, and fair play they are allowed to put who they want on the bill."

He added: "I don't begrudge anyone, there is so much talent on the British scene and I have had plenty of opportunities that other people haven't had. I'm almost 30, I'm already successful, there is no need for them to touch me."

"I'm not bitter about it, and there's some TV I'd love to do, obviously – I love *Taskmaster*. On the other hand, I get to tour America, I see Tokyo, Australia, New Zealand."

He has had other opportunities. One of his two Netflix specials, *Jigsaw*, is a curiously tender thing about broken relationships and brought a call from a senior editor at Knopf, the US publishing house, encouraging him to turn his material into a book.

Sloss said he had been resistant at first, saying: "I'm a comedian, it's not what I do. This was like asking a chef to design a computer game. It was not something I had ever considered doing."

"The guy from Knopf was very encouraging. I enjoyed writing it, it's a book about all different sorts of relationships, romantic relationships, toxic relationships, but others with family, friends, your country. The Knopf guy said 'it's very good', but he's paid to say that." *Jigsaw* is published later this year.

The Drive-in Club opens at Brent Cross at noon on July 3. Sloss plays there until July 5, then moves to the Müller site in Dagenham, east London, from July 10 to 12.