

ALEX THEATRE, ST KILDA AND THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF COMEDY

Vass Theatre Group is pleased to announce a new strategic alliance with The Australian Institute of Comedy.

The presence and participation of the Australian Institute of Comedy (“AIC”) is an exciting addition to the new Arts Innovation & Technology Hub within the Alex Theatre in St Kilda that was founded by Aleksandar Vass OAM to explore the creative state.

The AIC will be working in alliance with the Alex Theatre to offer a suite of comedy education programs, as well as its museum and historical archives preservation.

AIC fits in well with the Vision for the Alex Theatre’s new Hub:

- A destination to experience all aspects of the arts, including humour, comedy and laughter programs
- The development of new artistic talent, particularly comedians
- Partnering with production and media companies to develop comedy content
- Strengthening the ability of the arts to resist political correctness that threatens to strangle the creative juices of many, particularly comedians.

Key members of the Advisory Board of the AIC, led by Charles Kovess, Jack Levi, Pete Crofts and Jeanette Leigh, will be working with Vass Theatre Group.

“We are excited to be involved in spreading the value of humour, comedy and laughter and developing new creative content in an amazing environment that offers collaboration in an arts innovation hub” says Charles Kovess.

Chairman of AIC, Charles Kovess. Charles is a former lawyer, the founder of Kovess International, the President of the Australia-Hungary Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Past National President of the National Speakers Association of Australia, and is the author of two books, *Passionate People Produce* and *Passionate Performance*. Amongst a broad range of interests, Charles has promoted sustainability practices and philosophies since 1976, when he invested into an organic farm, and challenges audiences to passionately promote the need for sustainable behaviours, both personally (by being healthy!) and globally (by keeping our planet alive!)

Founder of the AIC, Pete Crofts. Pete ‘you’ve gotta laugh’ Crofts says life’s too mysterious to take too seriously. “After all, we live on a funny spinning planet in an ever-expanding humourverse - so you’ve gotta laugh for the sake of world peace. Pete toured Australia for 15 years as a professional stand-up comedian, and is an internationally renowned humour power speaker, author, futurist and coach. In 1974 he opened the world’s first bookshop, specialising in humour, comedy and laughter in Melbourne. It soon became the world’s first Humourversity, housing the largest book library, record collection, memorabilia and ephemera collection. Pete Pie-On-Eared Australia’s first humour conference, comedy festival and laughter club.

Jack Levi. After completing a university degree and corporate work in the IT Industry, Jack decided to follow his passion and do stand-up comedy as a career. With guidance from comedy coach Pete Crofts, he launched into Melbourne’s comedy clubs and evolved the very original and successful character, Elliot Goblet. Over the last 30 years he’s done over 60 stand-up spots on national television including the Daryl Somers Show, then Hey Hey It’s Saturday, and the Midday Show, and performed across Australia and the world. Among his proud achievements is the best-selling book, “Business According To Goblet”, an Aria-nominated CD called “Internally Berserk”, a cameo role in the movie, “Fat Pizza” and being the support act for the band “America” during an Australian tour. He likes to break from public shows to bring funny business to serious business by performing at corporate events and weddings as an MC.

Jeanette Leigh. As a journalist, author, blogger and humourist, Jeanette Leigh writes about ways to be fabulous, at peace with the world, and balanced physically, mentally and spiritually, just like in a dream she once had. She's had 5 books published, four on health and one biography; a very naughty book about a prominent figure in the sex industry. A gig's a gig, right? Otherwise, she was a columnist and feature writer for The Age and many other publications, and in a previous life she was an actress and singer. Recently she's written a feature film and two comedy series.

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