



CORPORATE HIGHJINKS A HIT

GIVE COMIC ROASTS THE DIRT... AND THEY'LL DO THE DEED!

Geoff Sirmai and David Fisher reckon they've got the best job in the world. As "Comic Roasts" the popular satirical songsters are the toast of the special event scene, performing at corporate functions and private parties.

And it's as much fun for them as their audiences!

"Not only do we get to meet some wonderful people (and hear some great gossip, *straight* from the horse's mouth) but we get to write comedy about it," says the duo's waggish front-man, Geoff.

"And then – the cream on the cake – there's the satisfaction of seeing our clients laugh as their personality traits, history and high-jinks are re-told to the tune of popular songs."

Geoff & David have given the Comic Roasts 'treatment' to scores of leading companies, including banks, developers, legal firms and pharmaceutical companies. They've roasted retiring CEOs and politicians, launched products and sent-up whole divisions of staff at corporate celebrations.

And at private functions they've taken the mickey from retiring school principals, war heroes, famous physicians, TV personalities and sports stars. They've toasted the staff, students *and* parents at ritzy private schools, and done star turns at major media and sporting events.

"It's a celebration in song."

You'd wonder how they get away with what sounds very much like biting the hand that feeds them. But they insist it's more of a *nibble* than a full-fledged *chomp*.

"We're always guided by the brief our clients give us," says Geoff. Having spent some time with the key people, Geoff and David know just how far they can go.

"And our clients already self-select for a sense of humour," adds co-roaster and keyboard whiz, David Fisher. "People who enjoy planning a good time for their guests are usually the type who enjoy a good-natured send-up."

He's not joking. A look down their impressive



client list reveals no shortage of good-humoured customers with well-developed funny bones: St George Bank, Telstra, IBM, AGL, Bayer, Deutsche Bank, KLM, Meriton, Wella, Goodman Fielder, and the Australian Rugby Union – among scores of others - have all experienced the Comic Roasts *treatment*.

Explains Geoff: "It's a celebration of the whole gang in song. There's nothing more team-building than tailor-made comedy, especially when it climaxes with a singalong company 'anthem' or a tribute to the guest of honour."

The pair have often returned to the 'scene of the crime' hours after a performance to find guests still singing their new company song or family anthem. "That's a real hoot!" says David.

Both university-qualified musicians, the two met in the '80s while directing and performing in student revues. Then followed success in cabaret, musical comedy, TV and radio – while pursuing separate careers as broadcasters and journalists. But the roar of the crowd proved irresistible for them both.

They discovered they shared a gift for writing satire and a rapport when working together that was as much fun for themselves as for their audiences.

After 'knocking 'em dead' at private functions, the corporate circuit was a natural progression.



“The secret is in the briefing”

According to the pair, one of the most satisfying reactions from clients is amazement at the detail of the musical portrait. “We’re often told it seems like we’ve known the firm – and its staff - for years,” says David. “The secret is in the information we tease out at the briefing.”

They’re pretty pleased with the reactions they’ve had from high-profile ‘targets’ like media personality Jamie Durie, Brisbane Lord Mayor Jim Soorley or senior business leaders St George Bank MD Gail Kelly and Meriton boss Harry Triguboff.

Likewise when dishing out the fun for high profile celebrities and sporting stars. Dual football code international Wendell Sailor, netball champion Liz Ellis and cricket legend Dean Jones all enjoyed being roasted (“medium-rare, just pink!” says Geoff).

Do the pair fear an angry, hot, roasted mob? David grins at the suggestion.

“At one company’s lavish Christmas party - in front of assembled media, staff and clients - we satirised the high-profile foibles of the MD, one of Australia’s most powerful businessmen. Everyone was so nervous, they were waiting for him to laugh before they did. Luckily they didn’t have long to wait!”

Turns out it was a great morale-booster to see the boss letting his hair down, laughing along with the whole company.

But surely they must have offended

“Well, there was this one gig...”
“A Christmas party on a cruising yacht always a potential worry, because

“It turned out we were a great success with just about everyone – the boss, the top managers, and the staffer who’d booked us.

“Just one audience member bailed us up afterwards: he was upset we *hadn’t* mentioned him!”

The lesson? If you’re going to put on a roast, make sure there’s enough to go around!

Geoff Sirmaj & David Fisher cook up Comic Roasts for corporate and private events. Visit their site at www.comicroasts.com.au

a client *some* time?

begins Geoff, sheepishly. on Sydney Harbour – there’s no escape!

