

BIG LAUGHS ARE SET TO TAKE OFF

SARAH WALTERS MEETS COMEDIENNE CAROLINE REID AND HER CREATION PAM ANN

OCCUPY a character for long enough, and it has to become more and more difficult to know where the person ends and the performer begins.

Take air hostess Pam Ann – a 1960s glamour girl and icon of international travel version – who Australian comedienne Caroline Reid has been playing for 18 years. She grew ‘organically’ out of a

drunken night, with a look inspired by Caroline’s beautiful mother (who even had ‘bed make up’) and the cabin crew she met when she was young and travelling as an unaccompanied minor.

She never was going to be a complete work of fiction. “But I’m not like Barry Humphries (Dame Edna),” she continues, “where I put on the clothes and now I’m the character. For me, it’s so grey. I’m myself as well

and not her at all, but then I’ll turn it on for friends because she’s a good safety net.

“She was born out of a love of doing performance. I was always really bad at auditions and never got roles. I just clammed up and could never read off a script. Still can’t,” she laughs. “So to get further with what I thought I wanted to do, the answer was to do it on my own.”

That early taste for air travel fuelled an interest in marketing and design at art school, then ultimately fashion.

“The comedy came way later,” she smiles. “I was more interested in finding the costumes and calling the drag queens at first.

“I feel like I’ve only just discovered the comedy really.”

That bit definitely isn’t true. For almost 20 years, Pam has tickled the funny bones of global audiences and mega stars, including Madonna, Cher and Elton John.

She arrives in Salford with new show FLY on Monday ahead of a five week run in the West End. And Pam’s so versatile she now has a cast of dozens of flight attendant friends – all of them played by Caroline – and not all of them entirely PC. It’s a warning worth extending



● International air hostess Pam Ann, aka Caroline Reid

to audiences; Pam has become a vehicle for tackling the tricky topics of race and religion – and lampooning the audience. “It’s great for me to have a multicultural audience because it’s just a wealth of material already sitting there. I can do an hour just talking to the

audience and not even planning what I’m talking about.

“Everything I’ve ever done in my show is improvised, I don’t write any of it. I go out with a list of words and hit them.”

● **The Lowry, Monday, £25-£28. W: thelowry.com**

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Adam Bloom
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plus special guest

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The Best In Stand Up

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Comedy picks

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XS MALARKEY: Topping the bill this week is Chris Lynam and his wonderful slapstick clowning skills; support from Sam Avery, Richard Todd, Alfie Brown and MC Toby Hadoke. **Tuesday 7.30pm. The Pub/Zoo, Grosvenor Street** (pubzoomanchester.co.uk/01612731471). £5/£3 members.

SOPHIE WILLAN – THE NOVICE DETECTIVE: A heart-warming comedy from Sophie Willan – returning to Contact following her win at Flying Solo Festival 2012 – this time taking on the role of detective after her father goes missing and leaves behind few clues. **Tomorrow 8.30pm. Contact, Oxford Road** (contactmcr.com/01612740600). £9/£5 concs.

THE BEST IN STAND UP: A big bill of circuit favourites including likeable and laidback Canadian Tom Stade, plus Adam Bloom, Addy Van Der Borgh, Peter White and MC Ian Coppinger. **Tonight**

8pm/Tomorrow 7pm & 9.30pm. The Comedy Store, Deansgate Locks (thecomedystore.co.uk/01618399595). Tonight £18, concs £12/Tomorrow £20, concs £14.

BARREL OF LAUGHS: You know the drill: three top-notch comics (Dan Nightingale, Scott Bennett and Jeff Innocent), a sprinkling of compere funnies (Mick Ferry) and an after-show disco until the early hours. **Tonight/Tomorrow 7pm. The Frog & Bucket, Oldham Street** (frogandbucket.com/01612369805). Tonight £16 adv, concs £8 adv/Tomorrow £17 adv, concs £10 adv, more on the door.

COMEDYSPORTZ: Improvisational humour as two teams battle to create the funniest sketches, scenes and characters. **Tonight 6.30pm. Waterside Arts Centre, Waterside Plaza, Sale** (watersideartscentre.co.uk/01619125616). £7/£5 concs.

OFF THE RAILS COMEDY CLUB: Quick wit, intelligent punch-lines

and energetic storytelling from stand-up, TV warm-up and voice over artist Dan Nightingale. Also featuring James Sherwood and MC Rob Riley. **Tonight 8pm. The Royal George Inn, Greenfield, Manchester Road, Oldham** (07874 152338). £12.

DEAD CAT COMEDY: Free comedy at its finest as the Dead Cat Comedy gang make their monthly excursion to the Northern Quarter. MC Red Redmond introduces stand-up from Rachel Fairburn, Alan Sharp, Simon D Heaven and Phil Ellis. **Monday 8pm. TV21, Thomas Street** (tv21manchester.com/01618192221). Free.

ANDREW LAWRENCE – THERE IS NO ESCAPE: Vitriolic humour from the former double Edinburgh Comedy Award nominee and regular performer on Channel 4’s Stand Up For The Week. **Thursday 8pm. The Lowry, Pier 8, Salford Quays** (thelowry.com/08432086000). £14-£16.