

HE'S FRENCH FOR FUNNY

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TOBY WALKER delves deeper into the background of **BERTY CADILHAC's** comedy show, **VOULEZ-VOUS LAUGH AVEC MOI?**



In the talent pool of fame and celebrity, many stars have found their way to the deep end by first donning floaties and testing the water with comedy. Eric Bana took the piss out of Ray Martin and bogans on television long before he was kicking Hollywood ass in *Munich* or *Hulk*. And Jim Carrey's contorted silliness won him millions of fans before he dropped facial expressions altogether in order to become his own version of a 'serious' actor.

Some say Carrey was never cut out for dramatic acting and should have stuck to pulling faces for millions. Melbourne-based comedian Bert Cadilhac is thankful he never had to endure public criticism of his thespian calling, realising he was not destined for dramatic acting whilst undertaking a six-month course at NIDA in Sydney.

"One of the first lessons we did was acting for camera, so I was very focused on my scene and trying to be as deep and meaningful as possible," he explains. "When the teacher said, 'okay, cut!' I turned around to see the audience was holding their breath to refrain from laughing. That was not what I expected at all, but at the same time it gave me a hint that my accent was a bit more, let's say, fun than serious."

Words on a page do no justice to the heavy French accent that attaches itself to every English word that escapes Cadilhac's lips. Despite being born with a name made for the stage (his real name is Bertrand Cadilhac) and the YouTube clips of him doing stand-up at open mic nights in Los Angeles and New York, comedy is a relatively new adventure for Cadilhac.

"The very first time I did an open mic was in September 2008 in London," he says. "A couple of weeks before that I had been staying with friends in Bangkok and they told me they were having a party in which everyone needed to bring some kind of show or song. I didn't really know what to do but I knew it had to be funny so I spent a night trying to come up with ideas and concepts and all my brain came up with was sea urchins.

"I said, 'okay, that's the worst idea I've ever had,' but then I thought maybe it would work if I made a sea urchin costume instead.

"I ran out of time with that so I ended up making up a story about travelling around with the costume and being stopped by customs and everybody loved it.

"That was the day I decided I would try stand-up comedy."

Although he considers himself more of a comedy writer than stand-up act, Cadilhac has been busy building material from five-minute club spots into his first hour-long show called *Vouslez-vous Laugh Avec Moi?*, which he will premiere this month as part of the St Kilda Laughs Festival. At the same time he will also be trying to reach the pointy end of the Victorian heats of the Raw Comedy competition.

When the extent of French humour in this country generally extends to drunkenly mocking the name Gérard Depardieu and playfully quoting Yoplait commercials in conversation, Cadilhac accepts his accent will take centre stage for at least some of his act.

"I'm more focused on the material, but it's like the saying in comedy about the elephant," he says. "If you walk on stage with an elephant people are going to say, 'What's with the elephant?' So you have to mention it.

"At the beginning I was not that keen to play on the French thing because to me it's not that funny, it's normal.

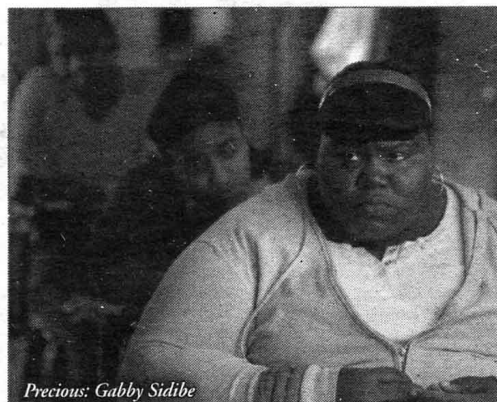
"So I decided I just needed to have fun with the clichés and try something new with them because at the end of the day it's not really about me it's about what people want to see and hear."

WHAT: *Vouslez-vous Laugh Avec Moi?*

WHERE & WHEN: Dogs Bar Thursday 4 February to Saturday 13

PRECIOUS DEBUTANTE

ROWENA GRANT-FROST talks to **GABBY SIDIBE**, the surprise star of Cannes, due to her role in the hard-hitting film, *PRECIOUS*.



I just wanted to run away and just not show up, that's how nervous I was. I had to lose the fear, though. I just had to do it. It was hard, but I just had to."

A few things surprised her about the filmmaking process ("I didn't realise how many people it took to make a film! There were just so many people on set. For everything"), but she started to settle in once she realised that acting basically involved listening to the director and following his instructions. But considering the big-name talent attached to the film – it's produced by Oprah and stars the likes of Mo'Nique, Mariah Carey and Lenny Kravitz – there were a few OMG-OMG moments yet to come.

"I was so star struck, so star struck," she says. "I'm such a fangirl, such a fan person. I mean these people to me are like amazing. I was unable to be cool, I just couldn't do it



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