

ARTIST OF THE MONTH

ANNETTE FAGON



STAND UP PERSONA

[Annette Fagon](#) is no comedian, she's just an angry woman on medication that uses the audience as an outlet to vent.

After numerous expensive counselling sessions with her anger management therapist, Annette has decided to save her money by bringing her thoughts to the stage – what choice do you have when your friends and family can't stand you?

From 'kids with mobile phones' to 'the fashion of today' prepare to laugh at the observations of the loudest, angriest women in the midlands. Whatever is pissing her off that day she's sure to share with you.

She's ignorant but entertaining.

Check out her interview with me when she was in one of her sane moments...

NSS: Greetings Annette, thank you for taking time out speak on *PANTHER NEWSLETTER*. Please tell the readers a little about yourself; where are you from?

AF: Greetings Normski. My name is Annette Fagon. I am 34 years old. I was born in Leicester, the youngest of four sisters and one brother, born to Jamaican parents. We grew up in Braunstone, an area of Leicester where you could count the number of black families on your hand. My mother owned a Newsagent and it was from this shop I first began to observe people from different backgrounds, culture and classes, unknowingly to me, would aid me in my future comedy ideas. I now live in Handsworth, Birmingham. I'm single with no children. As well as being a stand up Comedienne for over 3 years I work in the care industry, make West Indian hampers and have a carnival troupe called Soca Police see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKKpiRl3r24>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIh9eTOhLo4>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bb_MqpC2iO0&feature=related

NSS: Did you go into further education after leaving school: College/University?

AF: I studied a-level dance, drama and English. I just copied what my sister did. I didn't know what I wanted to be at 17. Alongside studying at this age I worked four part time jobs including - a freelance reporter for BBC Radio Leicester's: Herdle White Show and Talking Blues and was also a Director of Leicester Caribbean Carnival Committee.

I went to Birmingham City University formerly University of Central England in 1997. My sister went through clearing for me because I was in Ibiza with my boyfriend. I hadn't any offers for the Universities I applied for with UCAS. She got me on an Information studies course because it had a media module which was the direction I was heading, but the course was really for librarians.

After re-taking my first year I transferred onto a Multimedia Course which I failed in the second year. From that point I realised I had to find a career to justify/make up for my failures.

NSS: So what is your occupation are you a full time comedienne?

AF: I'd say I'm currently a part-time comedienne. Don't give up your day job is the first piece of advice I give to any comic. Without money coming in how are you going to get to an open-mic or a show? I currently work for a number of temping agencies within the care industry as a Disability/mental health/elderly care worker. Due to my lifestyle I have to find work that is flexible as work opportunities usually come at late notice and last minute cancellations are a regular occurrence in comedy so you have to be able book and cancel work at the last minute.

NSS: When did you first realise you wanted to be a comedienne? – What prompted you?

AF: I didn't. To this day it's something I would never choose to be. My sister entered both of us in a comedy competition – I thought it was an audition but it was actually a show. I didn't get anywhere in the competition but from then people started booking me and nearly every gig I did got me a booking somewhere else.

NSS: **What other comedienne have inspired by in particular?**

AF: [Lenny Henry](#) has. Politically he had to go through a lot to pave the way for other black comics such as me. He was the first comic I could relate to – British born, Jamaican parents and I think he represented the diversity brilliantly. Richard Pryor was my first true king of comedy. My older brother gave me a cassette recording of his 'Wanted' show – I was hooked from then. [Gina Yashere](#) is my main female idol – I watch her and learn not for her comedy but for her business mind – she's very sharp and makes logical choices.

NSS: **What do you enjoy about being funny?**

AF: Getting paid. I ain't even lying. I don't try and be funny I am funny so it's nothing I look into. It's nice that there are people out there who can relate to what I say and find it funny but I don't really care so long as I get paid at the end of the night. Comedy is therapy for me, the opportunity to have a bitch and a moan and get things off my chest.

NSS: **When you are on stage, what subjects do you talk about – Do you have a favourite?**

AF: I tend to talk about things that have baffled me and general observations. I use my friends and family to work out things that are funny and then try and find the humour in it. A lot of the time someone will laugh at something that I didn't intend to be funny and I use a lot of those ideas. I'm nicknamed the laziest comedian as I constantly recycle my work. I build on an idea so that it stretches from 30 seconds to 5 minutes and is a guaranteed laugh and tour all over the UK with the same material and get paid each time for it. Writing new material takes up my time so the money has to be good for me to do that.

NSS: **So do you write your own material?**

AF: Yes I do. I hate it when people say they've got something funny that I can use cos 10 times out of 10, it's not funny to me and I don't use material I don't find funny. When people have an idea I like I usually take their concept but change everything else thus making it relevant/funny to me.

NSS: **How do you go about that: for example; what kind of research is involved with putting your material together?**

AF: As I said I'm lazy so I don't really go out of my way to research. If it doesn't jump out at me it doesn't get used. I believe I get most of my ideas from conversations with people, watching people and talking to myself.

NSS: So in regards to when you do create your material, do you impose a discipline on yourself like schedules, goals etc?

AF: I try but I always fail, I get there in the end but never on the deadline.

NSS: How hard is it to become a successful black comedienne in the UK and what does it take for a person to be a success in your artistic genre?

AF: You're asking me? I'm still learning. It's hard; I have entered an industry that to me has no logic and major racist/sexist attitudes.

I don't believe in being a successful black comedian I believe in being a successful comedian. Richard Pryor is the greatest comedian of all time. He changed comedy forever for everyone yet still black comics have to be branded under a separate title.

Any industry you enter is going to be hard but you have to love this game in order to play it. It's not what you know it's who you know.

I believe as a black comic it has been easier for me as I have an outlet via the 'black circuit' but there are white/Chinese/Asian etc comedians that perform on those same circuits because if you've got the jokes you get booked.

On the main circuit they tend to have their favourites who get booked for everything despite them not always being funny.

Being a black female is also a benefit as there aren't a lot of us out there:

- [Gina Yashere](#)
- [Angie la Mar](#)
- [Felicity Ethnic](#)
- [Glenda Jaxson](#)
- [Donna Spence](#)

NSS: How do you promote yourself?

AF: Again, I am lazy. I do very little mainly due to working when I'm not gigging. I've got a press release, some photo's, a website, a manager and I guest host a radio show on [New Style Radio](#) with Charms Quailey every Wednesday 3-6pm.

NSS: Outside of 'being funny', what other interests and hobbies do you have?

AF: I love carnival and outdoor raves/weekenders.

NSS: Could you elaborate on the radio show you do at New Style Radio?

AF: It's the same as I do on stage – I have a moan; spout my opinions on a topic. It's a great laugh. Working with charms is brilliant – three hours of joke per week is good for the soul.

NSS: How important is New Style Radio to the black community?

AF: Extremely important. I moved from Leicester to Birmingham. I had brilliant networks within my community there, but when I moved to Birmingham I had none and no family in the west-midlands and therefore no base to begin networking. Places like New Style and [The Drum](#) helped me build those networks.

NSS: Finally, do you have any advice and encouragement you would like to share with any potential budding artistes?

AF: In terms of comedy – if you are looking to make money fast this is not the industry for you. If you are not independent – this is not the industry for you. If you are not confident – this industry will chew you up and spit you out. *But* if your passion, ambition and belief in yourself over-ride all of this – go for it. There's nothing to lose really.

NSS: Annette, thank you very much for taking time out and being interviewed for this birth month issue of Panther Newsletter. May our Creator guide you and protect you in all your future ventures.

For more information about Annette Fagon Comedienne, check her website:

www.myspace.com/annettefagon

Log on next month and meet another *SPECIAL GUEST* or *ARTIST OF THE MONTH* here on *PANTHER NEWSLETTER*.

More about Annette on the next page....

Annette Fagon

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| DOB | 24/9/75 | Nationality | British |
| Age | 34 years old | Ethnicity | |
| | Afro/Caribbean | | |
| Sex | Female | Height | 5ft 5ins |
| Marital Status | Single | Play Age | 14 -45 |

Additional Information

Management: Upfront Comedy

Manager: John Simmit
Contact: 0121 350 8992/07956 571 951

Acting Education/Experience

1984-89 **Guillains School of theatre:** many theatrical productions at The Little Theatre including pantomimes and examinations

1990-192 **Leicester Youth Theatre:** many theatrical productions at the Leicester Haymarket Theatre including Stephen Berkoff's 'Decadence'.

Educationally I went onto study Dance and Drama at A-level. In 2004 I began to perform live stand-up comedy, I currently perform and host shows at numerous pubs, clubs and Theatres within the UK and Europe.

Reviews

www.chortle.co.uk Tricycle Theatre, London 12/11/06
www.myspace.com/rogerthewriter Da Comedy Fun House, London 16/7/06

Competitions

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|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Comedy Café – London | competition 2007 | 1st place |
| Midland Stand-Up | New Comic 2007 | 2nd Place |
| Birmingham Post & Mail best | best newcomer 2003 | 3rd Place |

Presenting/hosting experience

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|---------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2010 | Global Energy 2010 | Drum n Bass Weekender |
| 2006-9 | Upfront Comedy | comedy throughout UK |
| 2005 | Reggae Rocks (live) | Artsfest, Birmingham |
| 2005-06 | Creative Insights (bands) | 15 pub outlets, B'ham |
| 1991-93 | Freelance Broadcaster | BBC Radio Leicester |

Television and Online Video:

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Production Company</u> | <u>Website link</u> |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| Kojo's Comedy Funhouse | MTV Base 2010 | Not available online. Behind scenes: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36K7I |
| Laughter Shock (BBC3 sketch show – pilot) | Brown Eyed Boy 2010 | http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00rvbt2 |
| Hometime BBC2 Comedy Drama | BBC | http://www.bbc.co.uk/comedy/extra/video/p004fdv8 |
| TV Advert | RSA, London Feb-June 2008 | http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yXZUUYUD47s |

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| (Churchill Insurance '08 campaign) | terrestrial/digital | |
| Rate My | Current TV 2007 | http://current.com/items/88806747_rate_my_life |
| Technology's tekkin over | Current TV 2007 | http://current.com/items/87248851_technology_s_tekkin_over |
| constant comedy | Constant Comedy 2007 | http://www.constantcomedy.com/Profiles.aspx?username=annettefagon |
| Anonymous Humourous | Screen West Midlands 2004 | http://vids.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=vids.Channel&ChannelID=7638 |

Online Info: <http://www.comedycv.co.uk/annettefagon/index.htm>

Films

- 2001** **Anonymous Humorous (2003)**
5 min Documentary/film, repeatedly televised on ITV1 and in numerous theatres/Art Centres/cinemas throughout the West midlands as part of Screen West Midlands
- 2002** **A Day in the Life of a Gangster Ho (2001)**
Starring, Written and Directed by Annette Fagon

Theatre Productions include:

North: West Yorkshire Playhouse, Contact Theatre. The Victoria
South: Broadway Theatre, Castle Theatre, Hackney Empire, The New Wolsey Theatre, The Paul Robeson Theatre, Tricycle Theatre, Comedy Theatre
East: Haymarket Theatre, The Little Theatre, Playhouse Theatre, Y Theatre
West: Custard Factory Theatre, Alexander Theatre

Stand-up Performances include:

North: Asian Invasion (Edinburgh Fringe), Sheffield city Hall, The Met, Opus and Manchester Jongleurs the Frog & Bucket.
South: BBC 1xtra, Brunel/South Bank University, Croydon Clock Tower, Da Comedy funhouse, Rise Festival, Harrow Arts Centre, Kings Head, Omni Comedy Club, Treaty centre, Jongleurs.
East: Ale Wagon, BBC Radio Leicester, Jongleurs, Peepul Centre.
West: Jongleurs, Swansea University, The Drum, The Place 2b kuumba – Bristol, Centenary Square.