

Shappi Korsandi – Stand up

Callum: Hello, I'm Callum Robertson and this is Weekender. The Edinburgh International festival is a month-long arts and cultural festival held in August in Scotland's capital city, Edinburgh. A large part of the Festival is known as the festival fringe which puts on performances of theatre, comedy and music.

In today's programme we feature Shappi Khorsandi an artist who performed a stand-up comedy show at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Our reporter Claire Mace caught up with her after her show. Where does Shappi come from and how when did she start doing stand up?

Shappi Korsandi

My name is Shappi Korsandi and I'm from London but I'm Iranian and I'm doing a show at the Edinburgh festival called Asylum Speaker.

How did you become a female stand-up comedienne?

Well, I've always been a female and the stand-up comedy came later in my life when I started to go to lots and lots of comedy clubs and I realised that it was the job for me. And finally when I was about 23 or 24 I started to do shows at little comedy clubs around London and slowly that got bigger and better and I became professional.

Callum: Shappi is Iranian by descent but comes from London. She started doing stand up in her early twenties. And in her act, what kind of jokes does she tell?

Shappi Korsandi

I make jokes about a lot of things, pop music, stuff that's going on in my life, for example I'm getting married in September. I was born in Iran, so that's a rich source of humour, talking

about my background and the culture that I come from. Being middle-eastern anything that's going on in the middle-east is a source of material for me. And I talk about more common things like boyfriends and clothes and being shy and all sorts of things, so just things that are personal. I think that my humour is all based on personal stuff that's happened to me or that I'm going through.

Callum: Shappi's jokes are based on her personal experiences, such as her getting married, everyday topics like pop music, clothes and boyfriends and also her Iranian heritage. She describes her middle-eastern background as a rich source of material – a rich source of material – at topic which has lots of opportunities for humour.

Being a Londoner with an Iranian background gives Shappi an insight into both cultures – do the British and Iranians have similar senses of humour? What difference does she mention?

Shappi Korsandi

I think that British people have a very self-deprecating sense of humour. And Iranian humour tends to be a lot more philosophical I guess in some ways. We don't laugh at ourselves as much as the British do.

Callum: She says that the British have a self-deprecating sense of humour – self-deprecating – we often make fun of ourselves more than Iranians do. She goes on to explain more about the differences between British and Iranians. She talks about 'cracking jokes' which is another expression for making jokes and 'breaking the ice' which refers to doing something in a situation where people don't know each other to make everyone feel more relaxed and comfortable. Listen out for those expressions.

Shappi Korsandi

But I have to say that the biggest difference between Iranians and British people is that Iranian people have all sorts of formalities that you have with people you don't know but British people you can meet someone in a shop or at passport control and you can crack a joke. And that's the biggest difference I think. What I love about British humour is that whoever you are, whoever you meet people crack jokes and it breaks the ice. Perhaps that's because British culture tends to be more reserved so you need to crack the ice, Iranian people tend to get intimate with each other a lot quicker than British people do so perhaps there's not that immediate need for humour. So that I think is the main difference.

Callum: British people, she says, use humour as a way to break the ice and crack jokes with strangers in a way that Iranians don't. She thinks this may be because the British are more reserved.

Well that's all from this edition of Weekender.