

Mixing magic and comedy with Riaad Moosa

 By [Emily Stander](#)

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Since the mask mandate lifted, people have been aching to get back to live events - and popular South African comedian Riaad Moosa has some special live standup shows for us to enjoy through the remainder of the year.



Image supplied: South African comedian Riaad Moosa

Moosa has been in the industry for more than 20 years now. Starting in 1999, Moosa's career first took to an interesting magical twist before he found his signature satire we know and love today.

We spoke with him to find out more about his start, but also to find out how the comedian fared during Covid-19 and the disastrous effects it had on performers.

The performance bug was always there

Even though his first route was studying medicine, Moosa has always had a penchant for performance. He studied at the College of Magic in Cape Town as a teenager, and he says that his magic always took a comedic slant.

It was when he decided to take a gap year from studying medicine, that he was exposed to stand-up comedy for the first time at the University of Cape Town.

"I was entranced by the art form," Moosa says.

After this, he started spending time with the Cape Comedy Collective, a comedic group started by Mark Sampson and Sam Piercer. He also performed with other comedians such as Marc Lottering and David Kau.

"I was a magician, initially, a comedy magician. But very soon, I got rid of my bag of tricks and just started doing standup comedy," he says.

After returning to finish his medical degree, Moosa continued to do standup. After completing his entire degree, internship and all, he decided to take part in *The Puremunati Show*, and this tipped the balance that led to him becoming one of the most popular comedians in South Africa.

Then there was Covid

"Most of us didn't cope, I certainly didn't cope," Moosa says when thinking back to lockdown. "From a psychological perspective, I didn't realise how much I needed comedy, how much it affected my mood - just the opportunity to perform. I missed it significantly."

However, there was some light at the end of the tunnel with his Virtual Comedy Club. And this bred a new way of looking at comedy. "This is another medium we can enjoy beyond the live performance option, which at the end of the day, reaches more audiences - international audiences and guests included."

Predominantly, though, the virtual club was born out of necessity. “I had to pivot, I had to experiment, I had to try to see if new opportunities could arise,” Moosa says.

And although it was a new medium that brought its own challenges, there is still potential in the virtual comedy sphere, according to Moosa. “In the future, virtual comedy will become something that people will be able to do more as the technology improves.”

Comedy is a kind of celebration

When we think about entertainment, comedy is not on the serious side of looking at the issues we face in our personal lives and globally.

However, comedy does have a distinctive place in the world of entertainment and how we deal with our problems.

“Comedy is important because it allows us to look at a stressful event and interpret it with a mindset that we’ve survived it,” Moosa says. “They say tragedy plus time equals comedy, and it’s true because people can laugh at the most horrible things as a stress relief and dealing with the trauma of it.”



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However, the key to being able to take this from comedy is by having the feeling that you have survived the event. “It’s about survival, people can laugh at things when they feel like they’ve gotten over something or they feel optimistic about the fact that they will get over something.”

In a way, then, comedy can be seen as a celebration of the strength people have to endure events that may have seemed impossible at first.

All about his upcoming shows

Moosa says we can expect his usual satire-and-family-inspired performance from his upcoming shows. “It’s usually a snapshot of my life at a particular time and how I’ve changed as I’ve gotten older. It’s something people that, so far, have found very relatable and I can’t wait for people to see it. ”

Virtual and live performances are available.

These are the dates for Moosa’s remaining shows:

7 October at Rio Casino, Klerksdorp
8 October at Umfolozi Casion, Empangeni
28 October at Silverstar Casino, Krugersdorp
29 October at Gandhi Hall, Lenasia
11 November at Blackrock Casino, Newcastle
12 November at Golden Horse Casino, Pietermaritzburg
9 and 10 December at Theatre of Marcellus, Johannesburg

Tickets can be purchased [here](#).

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