

Industry Live offers students top tips and stories for career success.



Industry Live – 10 Sept 2020 – 11.30am-12.30pm AEST

Careers on and off screen:

Fancy a career in the spotlight or perhaps working behind the scenes to create some of the TV, films and media we love to watch? There are many exciting roles in these industries that we'll explore

Luke McGregor – Actor, writer and comedian

Luke is an actor, writer and comedian who has performed at national and international comedy festivals and appeared in many TV shows. He is best known for his work on TV series *Rosehaven* and *Utopia*. Luke grew up in Tassie where he attended university, and he'll talk to us about what it takes to grow a successful career in entertainment.

Nathan Kannegiesser – Stunt actor

Nathan is a stunt actor known for his stunt work on movies including *Hacksaw Ridge*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*, and *Fast and The Furious: F9*. Nathan will talk to us about what it's like to work in the movies, some of the interesting stunts he's performed, and the skills you'll need for getting into his line of work. Nathan pre-recorded his answers. See full recording at <https://youtu.be/6OxzDoERUyI>

Derek Hall – Head of studios

Derek is the Head of Studios for Screen Queensland and has worked directly on film projects for Universal, Marvel, Disney, IMAX and Netflix. Derek has also been a film producer and will share his insider knowledge about the film industry and his secrets for success.

Astrid Wells Cooper – Casting agent, actor and voice artist

Astrid is a casting agent, running Wells Cooper Casting, casting actors in Hobart & Brisbane. Astrid has been involved in casting for TV series *The Kettering Incident* and *Rosehaven*. Astrid is also an actor and voice artist. She'll talk to us about the skills you need to become a casting agent as well as her tips on getting into film and TV.

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Answers to text Q&A from students during the live event

To Luke: how did you become an actor and a comedian on tv shows?

I entered a stand-up competition called Raw Comedy when I was at uni. I didn't win but I realised at that point I really loved stand-up. At a gig I got noticed by a casting agent – which led to an audition for an ad that I ended up getting. From there I just kept auditioning for things on TV until eventually I started getting small roles in various shows – which lead to bigger roles.

TLDR – a lot of stand up, and a lot of auditioning until I got something.

To all panellists: What steps would you recommend a young person should take if they wish to become an actor?

From Luke: Register/create a profile on casting agency websites, sign up to casting newsletters, try and get in the room with people and give the best audition you can. You may not get the role, but if you did well you may get cast by the same people down the track. Anything you post online that can show off your skills doesn't hurt either, it's just another place people can discover you. Also any course you sign up to, any local theatre, improv group etc. could potentially put you in contact with other creatives – and that may lead to opportunities down the road.

To all panellists: If you could tell your younger self anything, what would it be?

From Luke: Nothing. I like where I'm at now and I have no idea what the repercussions would be to the space/time continuum if my future self started trying to directly influence my past self. That said, I'd probably tell my younger self not to sell my ghostbusters figurines at a garage sale for \$5.

To Luke, what is the inspiration for your comedy?

Usually it's either something that's happened to me in real life, or just something that I've thought about that's made me laugh. Like who was the first person to ride a horse?

To all panellists: what sort of things are you asked to do in an audition?

From Luke: In my experience – it's always preferred if you can do the scene without referring to the script. And you may be asked to do it in different ways – like 'be angrier/sadder/happier' etc. Just be prepared to tackle the scene in different ways depending on the direction you get.

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To Luke: Hey! How would you go about getting gigs (for stand up per se) in small communities?

If there's an open mic night – signing up to those is a good way to start getting stage time. If one doesn't exist – start one (easier said than done – but at least if you're running the event you're guaranteed to get stage time). If you're really brave – you could start trying to do stand up at family/friend/work events – basically anywhere there's an audience you can test your jokes on. I personally prefer random strangers though, that way if I bomb I don't have to see them again (not that this was really an option when I started in Tassie).

To all panellists: How hard is it to actually get into the entertainment industry?

From Luke: It depends on what part of the industry you want to get into. I'd say as a general rule – it's not hard, but you may not start off doing the job you ultimately want. For example, you may want to direct but you start off doing work experience in a camera department.

To Luke and Astrid: What's the funniest part of being an actor?

From Luke: Pretending for a living.

Hi Luke, what kind of writing do you do? What tips would you give for an aspiring author?

My experience writing up until this point has been mainly writing stand-up or for TV. My main advice is just to start. Don't worry if what you write is terrible. You don't have to show it to anyone if you don't want to. In regards to TV - you can search for screenplays online so you can see how they're written/structured. And don't be afraid to show people your work and ask for feedback – don't wait until something is 'perfect' then send it, let people you trust help you get it there.

To all panellists: what university degree would be beneficial to support someone to enter the field?

From Luke: I have no idea... I have an economics degree and now I'm a comedian for a living.

Luke, Why did you choose acting?

I really like acting because you get more than one take at getting something right. You can perform a scene over and over again then choose the best takes in the edit. In stand up – you have to get the joke you're telling right the first time (though that's also what I like about stand up, makes it exciting).

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To all panellists: If I write a script how do I get it to a director or producer?

From Luke: *It's a lot easier to get someone to read a pitch than a script. For example, the average script length of a Rosehaven episode is 40 pages, but the pitch document was only around half a page. The premise of the show could be described in a sentence: Two best friends running a small town real estate agency in Tasmania. I'd spend some time working on the pitch or summarising your idea – then you can use that as a hook to get people interested in reading your script.*

To all panellists: What did you think that you would do as a kid?

From Luke: *A doctor, or a professional cricket player (I was terrible at cricket).*

To all panellists: Because the film industry is heavily male dominated, would you say it is harder for female creators (producers, directors) to break through into the industry. Are there any tips for females (or other minorities) for getting into the industry?

From Luke: *As a white male I'm not really sure how to answer this one. There'd be ways I benefit that I'm probably not even aware of. I hope the industry is becoming more inclusive, but it's definitely got a long way to go. If you're reading this and you're not a white male – please go for it. You can be whatever you want to be in the industry, and if someone like you has never been in the position you want to be in – be the first.*

To all the white males reading this – if you're feeling threatened by change, or thinking 'it's not fair what about me and my dreams?' – please don't worry. There's enough room for everyone in this industry – it's what's so great about the arts. As long as there are ideas there's opportunity – and we're never going to run out of ideas.

I just want to add, I spoke to a friend about the above, and they told me something I think is really important to remember as you pursue your chosen career path: we all have the ability and responsibility to agitate for change in the industry, and in other industries, however small we may perceive our own influence. Change happens when we all don't turn a blind eye to systemic imbalances.

To Astrid/Luke - who do you recommend as an agent for young people with minimum experience?

From Luke: *I got help with this one too, my management suggested:*

'It can be useful to join an Agency that does extras and bit part work so you can gain valuable on set experience. You'll learn industry language and etiquette first hand, neither can be taught! AND – avoid an Agency that wants you to sign a fixed term contract.'

I hope that helps, thanks for the questions!