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“So Who the Bloody Hell Are We?” Siren Awards Breakfast and Masterclass to focus on radio comedy

The winner of the 2006 Siren Awards for creative excellence in radio advertising will be announced at a gala breakfast in Sydney in May featuring renowned Australian comedy director, Ted Emery and Nova's Bianca Dye as host.

Emery will present the winner of the 2006 Siren Awards at the breakfast and also be guest speaker at the Sirens Masterclass, a creative seminar focusing on Australian comedy, and called “So Who the Bloody Hell Are We?”, which will follow the breakfast.

Arguably one of Australia's greatest comedy directors, Ted Emery has an extensive history in the Australian film and television industry. Best-known for his work on the smash hit, Kath & Kim, Emery has also directed comedy programs D-Generation, Acropolis Now, Fast Forward, Full Frontal, Tonight Live, Eric Bana Special, Jimeoin and The Micallef Programme. He also directed The Craic and his TV credits include popular music series Countdown, documentaries and news and current affairs for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). Emery will talk about the secret to Kath and Kim's success and any lessons that can be learnt for advertising.

The Masterclass will also feature Senior Lecturer in Cinema Studies at La Trobe University, Dr Felicity Collins. Dr Collins has won a two-year Australian Research Council Discovery Grant looking at how comedy can be understood in terms of nationhood and identity and will talk about radio's role in the formative years.

International creative expert and creator of the award-winning Australian radio brand campaign, Ralph van Dijk of Eardrum Australia will also talk at the Masterclass. Last week, Van Dijk's agency, Eardrum, won five awards at the UK 2006 Aerial Awards for radio advertising including the Gold, Silver and Bronze in the Best Directing category. Commercial Radio Australia has contracted Mr van Dijk, who moved to Australia from the UK earlier this year, as consultant Creative Director with a general brief to promote radio as an advertising medium.

“This is not one of those Australia Day navel gazing exercises. The Siren Masterclass will provide practical insights to what makes Australians laugh and why. With so much advertising attempting to engage through comedy, creatives of all levels could do with improving their skills in this area,” said Mr van Dijk.

Chief executive officer of Commercial Radio Australia, Joan Warner said the annual Sirens breakfast and Masterclass provided a great opportunity to recognize the excellence in Australian radio advertising and also look at ways to further improve it.

“This year's focus on comedy will help all those writing for radio to understand better about writing and performing Australian comedy for Australians,” Ms Warner said.

The winner of the 2006 Siren Awards will be chosen from the winners and highly commended from the five rounds of the Awards and will be judged by the Siren Creative Council - comprising leading creative directors from national advertising agencies. The 2006 winner will be automatically entered into the inaugural Cannes Radio Lions – to be held in June and will also win two tickets to attend the festival.

“This provides a fantastic opportunity for excellent Australian radio creative to be judged along with the world’s best at one of the most prestigious events held for creatives and will provide a great benchmark for the industry,” Ms Warner said.

Last year’s inaugural Gold Siren Award winner was the Victoria Bitter campaign. The advertisement, written by Josh Stephens and Ben Coulson from George Patterson Partners (Melbourne), with creative director, James McGrath, uses comedy and the well-known VB theme song to sell beer.

Both the Sirens breakfast and Masterclass will be held at Taronga Zoo in Sydney on May 11. The breakfast will run from 8am to 9:30am and the Masterclass will follow the breakfast and includes lunch. Tickets are on sale now at \$550 for the breakfast and Masterclass combined and \$60 for breakfast only. For more information contact phone 02 9281 6577 or to download your ticket booking form visit the dedicated website www.sirenawards.com.au.

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