

Max Gillies

Biting satirist, brilliant comic

Max Gillies is most recognized for his work over more than three decades impersonating Australia's political leaders and public figures. His comic impersonations and humorous imaginary characters are devastatingly accurate and supremely funny. Max has created several shows to widespread acclaim including the ABC television series *The Gillies Report*.



What some may not be aware of, however, is that the veteran entertainer also enjoys a distinguished career as an actor. He was the first Chair of the Australian Performing Group and he continues to perform on stages around Australia with several theatre companies.

A superb talent, Max Gillies is in high demand for his sensational corporate acts, which he tailors to suit individual events.

More about Max Gillies:

Max has had a passion for theatre and politics from a young age. At school he spent much of his time in the school debating team, drawing political cartoons for the school magazine, editing the two student newspapers and going to all the house and school plays he could winkle his way into.

Australia's involvement with America's war in Vietnam was a time of deep political disenchantment and one that spurred on Max's interest in theatre. During this period, he and some of his friends, including David Williamson, Graeme Blundell, Greig Pickhaver and Bruce Spence, formed a theatrical co-operative called the Australian Performing Group as a potent medium for expressing their disenchantment with the old Australia and their hopes for a new one. For the best part of ten years, they performed new Australian plays for a new Australian audience in a converted pram factory in Carlton. Of the many Australian plays they did at the time, *Dimboola* attracted one of the biggest audiences. It was so successful it was even made into a movie.

Max made his way into television in the 1970's and in the 1980's joined the ABC to create *The Gillies Report* in which he impersonated some of the world's top political and economic figures including Bob Hawke, Sir John Kerr, Jim McClelland, Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and John Elliot.

He has starred in theatre performances such as *'Allo, 'Allo*, *Run For Your Wife*, *After The Ball*, *Misalliance*, *The Club*, *Noises Off*, *The Merry Widow* and *Happy Days*. He received rave reviews

for the show *Your Dreaming*, in which he portrayed John Howard, Bob Ellis, Germaine Greer and Robert Hughes, to name but a few!

A highly flexible playwright and actor, in 2005 Max Gillies wrote and starred in the political show *The Big Con*. In 2008, he collaborated with The Queensland Theatre Company to tour Australia performing *Heroes*, a play translated by Tom Stoppard, from the original French script by Gerald Sibleyras, which was a hit in both France and England. In 2009 and 2010 he wrote and starred in *Godzone*, which was inspired by the increasing influence of religion in politics and the leadership victory of former trainee priest Tony Abbott.

Max Gillies has been influential in the development of Australian theatre. In 2007, he and composer Brenton Broadstock joined the University of Melbourne as Vice-Chancellor's Fellows. His primary focus was to develop a major new piece of Australian theatre dealing with large and historical political themes since World War II. He was also charged with assisting the development of theatre skills and practice on campus.

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