

In the last ten years, comedy has shifted in a multitude of ways. From the use of vulgar and obscene humor, to more abstract and high-concept jokes, comedy has leapt forward in recent years.

One show that capitalizes on this brand of indie, mind-boggling humor is IFC's "Comedy Bang! Bang!," a show that parodies the structure of a late night talk show. Hosted and co-created by comedian Scott Aukerman, the show is a spin-off of his podcast with the same name. During its five season run, guests such as Kid Cudi, Weird Al Yankovic and Reggie Watts all served time as the show's band leader.

"Comedy Bang! Bang!" uses a variety of techniques to deliver its quirky, off-brand humor. Aukerman employs deadpan expressions and self deprecation in order to convey the jokes concerning the episode's main topics. This can range from an inability to host the show, to backhandedly insulting the band leader.

Not only is the humor driven by Aukerman and the various band leaders, but much of the comedy is a result of the guest stars that are recruited. Celebrities such as Anna Kendrick, Adam Scott and Aziz Ansari are featured as special guests, usually playing part in a joke, or spoofing the proceedings of a late night show, rather than plugging their own projects or materials.

A recurring group of fictitious characters, played by a group of comedians like Paul F. Tompkins and Nick Kroll also take part in the show's madness. These characters range from little orphan boys to evil villains trying to change the past. The guests usually are deranged, and are willing to cause some sort of harm to the hosts.

The appeal of "Comedy Bang! Bang!" comes from its willingness to break away from conventional structure and use of character actors. Various episodes of the show borrow and spoof certain portions of other pop culture items. One episode uses the plot of "Die Hard" to influence its Christmas special. Another parodies the confusion that comes as a result of time travel, specifically calling back to "Back to the Future Part II."

The use of references not only adds a sense of familiarity in the comedic routines but gives the audience an established basis in which the show builds upon to construct high-concept jokes. Not only is this humor more abstract, it's also thought provoking and engaging for the audience.

The show's use of the tropes and cliches of a late night talk show also add to the overall appeal for the series. By using them, "Comedy Bang! Bang!" creates the sense that is not only mocking those shows, but twisting the format of the series. At times, the show blurs the line of absurdity

and begins to, at times, feel like a real talk show. The humor is still present, but does its job a little too well in some cases.

“Comedy Bang! Bang!” is a show that distorts the sense of what a late night talk show is to provide humor in the audience. The show is for anyone who enjoys off-brand comedy, as well as anyone looking to spend a weekend laughing at ridiculous exploits of today’s biggest celebrities.