

The List

What's on in August and September

COMPILED BY
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Comedian and former host of *The Mash Report*, **Nish Kumar**, explains how he deals with political chaos, comedic contradictions and onstage word vomit

My new show is a string of topics that are not necessarily everyone's idea of a fun night out. My setlists look like catalogues of human misery. I'm constantly afraid that people will see my notebooks, because they look psychotic. War, income inequality, climate crisis – it looks like I'm deliberately trying to list all the worst possible things that one could talk about.

I don't think anything is off limits when it comes to comedy. I've seen people do standup about every conceivable subject, and I think it's all about your approach and tone.

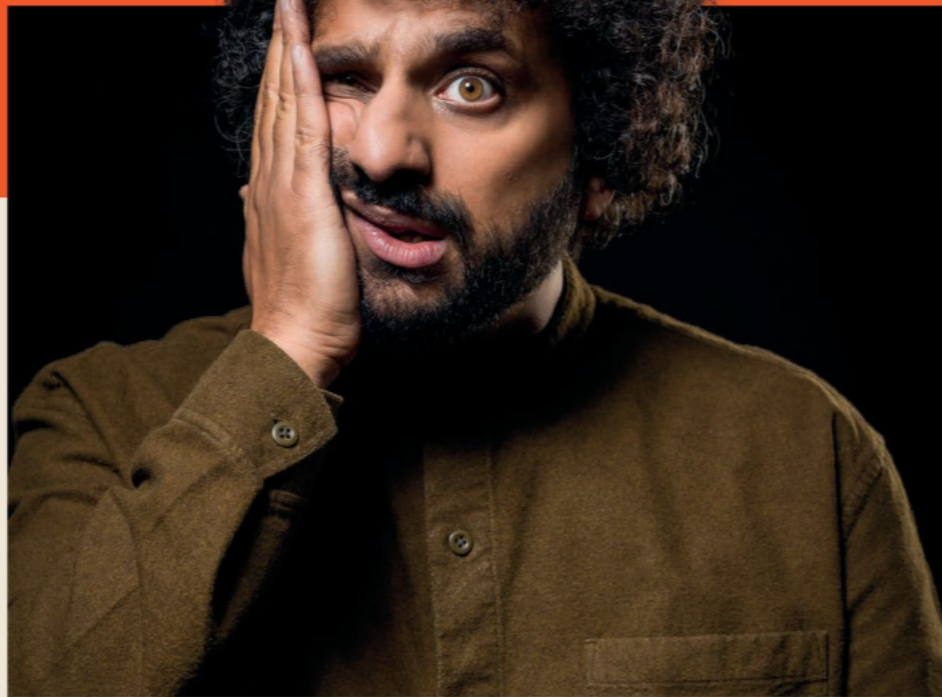
I grew up admiring lots of comedians. In terms of people working right now, I love Bridget Christie and Maria Bamford, and Roy Wood Jr is incredible. There's a really exciting crop of new acts coming through, some of whom are supporting me on tour. I think there's a lot of problems within the industry and the infrastructure of comedy right now, but we certainly don't have a problem in terms of the talent supply.

'Writing process' feels like too grand a term for what I do. I generally just get on stage and complain at volume. My shows end up being a snapshot of all of the things that are upsetting me at any one time. It's just the churn of things going through my head on a day-to-day basis, and then they get vomited out on stage.

I've been doing comedy for 15-16 years. At a certain point you have to accept that you've learned a lot of lessons. I've learned how to control my nerves. If you let nerves dominate, then the spectre of the gig ruins your day and that's unsustainable on tour. Now, nerves are something I release just before the show.



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Before a show, I generally tend to eat a lot of Nando's. I also talk shit with my support act and try to be as relaxed as possible. However, there's such a thing as being too comfortable on stage. The five minutes before I go on, I think, OK, release the adrenaline. Let's be sharp.

I always want to deliver something that justifies people spending their money on me. I don't take it lightly. But you can't get yourself worked up three to five nights a week. Comedy is a combination of contradictory things; it's about being incredibly prepared, but also completely spontaneous, and it's about being very intense, but also not intense at all. If I stopped enjoying comedy, then I would stop doing comedy.

I'm in Bristol all the time. I did a lot of gigs there when I was starting out. I really enjoyed doing Chops [the comedy night at 57 North Street Bar].

I was anticipating having to frantically rewrite the show through an election campaign. Having the election in July settles the big political question of this year, and there's some comfort in that. But if we've learned nothing from the last decade, it's that you can never rely on the news to stay calm and reasonable. So, who fucking knows what state we'll be in by the time I start the tour.

Nish Kumar comes to Bristol Beacon, September 26, and The Forum, Bath, on October 12.
nfd.io/nishk

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Mark Ernestus' **Ndagga Rhythm Force**
Strange Brew, Bristol
August 23

In which dub-techno don Mark Ernestus (Basic Channel) reconvenes his Ndagga Rhythm Force collaboration with some seriously talented Senegalese sabar musicians for a live show that will leave your brain rattling. Joyously deep and dubby, but also thrillingly dark and intense.

nfd.io/rhythmf

This Is the Kit
Cheese & Grain, Frome
August 17

Always with the emphasis on beguiling, Kate Stables has stuck resolutely to her own path for over 20 years now, performing propulsive yet warmly introspective folkish alt-pop with her group, This Is the Kit. Stables is in danger of becoming a fully-fledged star.

nfd.io/thiskit

Massive Attack
Clifton Downs, Bristol
August 25

The Bristol band's first UK show in five years marks the culmination of 25 years of climate activism. This show aims to set a new standard for the decarbonisation of live music and is the product of an R&D collaboration with climate scientists. Support from Killer Mike, Lankum, Sam Morton and DJ Milo.
nfd.io/mattack

Photos: Cedric Oberlin

Part Chimp
Komedia, Bath
September 19

A rare southwest show from one of the UK's finest (and loudest) underground bands. Twenty-four years after their tinnitus-inducing formation, Part Chimp keep grinding out a sludgy, lurching onslaught that channels Melvins, Black Sabbath and noise rock into one almighty, super-fuzzed *sturm und drang*.
nfd.io/pchimp

Fern Brady: I Gave You Milk to Drink
Bristol Old Vic
September 22

Scotland's current queen of comedy brings her latest show to the iconic Bristol theatre. She'll be sharing tales of spirit guides, magic mushrooms and Botox, as well as her experiences of being pigeonholed as an 'inspirational autistic woman'. Book tickets for her matinee or evening performance.
nfd.io/fbrady