



# Funny Women Awards: Grand Final Line-Up Announced

**10 exciting new acts  
5 celebrity mentors**

[Duchess Theatre, London](#)

Monday 12 March, 2018 at 7.30pm

Now in their fifteenth year, the **Funny Women Awards** have announced the finalists for the **Stage Award**, joining those already announced for the [Comedy Writing Award](#) and [Comedy Shorts Award](#) for which you can view the entries [here](#).

The awards received a record number of registrations this year - the Stage Award, alone, received over 400 entries and in total nearly 1,000 registrations and nominations for acts and shows were considered.

Previous Stage Award winners and finalists have included **Katherine Ryan, Zoe Lyons, Jayde Adams, Desiree Burch, Harriet Braine, Sara Pascoe, Sarah Millican** and **Susan Calman**.

In advance of the **charity final on March 12 at The Duchess Theatre in London, hosted by Jan Ravens** (*Dead Ringers, Spitting Image*), Funny Women have announced five celebrity mentors who will help the 10 Stage Award finalists hone their acts in the run up to the event. The mentors are: **Gemma Whelan** (*Game of Thrones*), **Sindhu Vee** (*As Yet Untitled*), **Phil Nichol** (*Never Mind The Buzzcocks*), **Patrick Monahan** (*Celebrity Squares, The One Show Edinburgh Festival*) and **Arnab Chanda** (*Russell Howard's Good News, Hunderby*), The mix of male and female comedians was decided upon to reflect the

HeForShe solidarity movement pioneered by the awards' charity sponsor, [UN Women National Committee UK](#).

**Funny Women founder, Lynne Parker said:**

"We have received a record number of entries this year across all four categories (Stage Award, Comedy Shorts, Comedy Writing Award and Best Show Award) and I personally saw over 400 women compete in live heats for the coveted Stage Award all over the UK."

"Women have such a strong and important voice in the comedy industry and so many of today's big names have taken part in the awards at the beginning of their careers. I am excited to see who comes next!"

**The Stage Award finalists - in alphabetical order - are:**

**Maisie Adam**

[@MaisieAdam](#)

Assistant Curator for festivals/events, aged 24, from Pannal, N.Yorks, now Brighton-based.

**Fun fact about Maisie:** "When I was at uni, I skipped a class to go on the ITV gameshow, 'The Chase'. I didn't win because I didn't know what bird was on the flag of Ecuador. I still can't look at the flag without feeling bitter - still, a day off uni is a day off uni."

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/yb5n6zbd>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/ycxknldu>

**Ashlee Bentley**

[@randomlyashlee](#)

Sales Assistant/Post Office Cashier, aged 27, based in her hometown of Dublin.

**Fun fact about Ashlee:** "I have named every stray cat I have ever met and remembered all of their names. Sometimes I think about them and wonder what they are up to."

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/yaacpkjn>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/yd8m8zqo>

**Amy Mason**

[@AmyCMason](#)

Novelist & theatremaker, aged 35, from Poole, Dorset, now lives in Walthamstow, London.

**Fun fact about Amy:** "I was the longest baby ever born at Derby City Hospital. Please no one find out whether that's changed...it's my proudest accolade."

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/yc546u6o>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/ybgc87t4>

**Jodie Mitchell**

[@JodieMitchell](#)

Freelance Theatre Programmer, aged 23, from Cambridge, now lives in London.

**Fun fact about Jodie:** "I don't always perform as a funny woman, I also does stand-up as drag-king, John Travulva, the queer, Glaswegian macho-man of everyone's dreams."

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/y8aups7b>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/yc5az3gn>

### **Thanyia Moore**

[@ThanyiaMoore](#)

Receptionist, aged 35, from South East London.

**Fun fact about Thanyia:** “When I was 10, I was in *Games Master* on Sky One. I didn't like games, I liked annoying my big brother by copying him!”

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/ybhf7acf>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/y7tq6s7g>

### **Chloe Petts**

[@Chloepetts](#)

Outreach worker with the homeless, aged 24 from Sittingbourne, Kent, now living in Streatham, London.

**Fun fact about Chloe:** “I have an irrational fear of my armpit being touched.”

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/ybtch7wb>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/y992wut8>

### **Lily Philips**

[@lily\\_comedy](#)

Temp / nanny / workshop facilitator with the charity Blesma, aged 30, from London.

**Fun fact about Lily:** “I used to be part of Pineapple dance studio's cheerleading squad. Then I realised how unfunny dancing was!”

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/ydxa5mkh>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/y6uaxy26>

### **Susan Riddell**

[@Lazy\\_Susan\\_](#)

Writer and comedian, aged 34, from Glasgow.

**Fun fact about Susan:** “I share custody of a Labrador.”

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/y7t2n2cc>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/y8ae8hwu>

### **Megan Shandley**

[@mcshands](#)

Actress, aged 27, from, and based in, Edinburgh.

**Fun fact about Megan:** “one of my hobbies is balloon modelling: single balloon elephant, two-balloon rabbit, THREE-balloon penguin, two-balloon dog (suspiciously similar to an elephant, but a true balloon modeller would never reveal her secrets).”

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/y8osae5u>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/ydhlut9x>

### **Louise Young**

[@LouiseYoung\\_](#)

Bartender, aged 28, from and based in Newcastle.

**Fun fact about Louise:** “I taste words. I've had it since I was tiny, certain words will have tastes and textures like I'm eating food. Especially names. Like Craig is coconut and Denise is a boiled carrot. It's horrible if someone's name is a flavour I don't like though. I thought would have got me a lot further in life if I'm honest.”

**Q&A:** <https://tinyurl.com/y6u7rwgy>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/yb8edufs>

## More about the mentors:

### Arnab Chanda

[@arnabacus](#)

Arnab Chanda was an in-house producer at BBC Radio Comedy before a career as a writer, actor, stand up and director, His credits include writing for Simon Amstell on *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* (BBC) and head writer for MTV's *Celebrity Bites*. A 2007 Chortle Best Newcomer Nominee, Arnab performed stand-up on shows including *The World Stands Up* (Comedy Central) and *Russell Howard's Good News* (BBC Two). He also appeared in the BAFTA nominated film, *Black Pond*, and in Ash Attalla's ITV series *Trinity*, Julia Davis's *Hunderby* (Sky Atlantic), *Cardinal Burns* (E4), and E4's *Noel Fielding's Luxury Comedy*.

<http://www.arnabchanda.com>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/y8o8daz6>

### Patrick Monahan

[@PatrickJMonahan](#)

Patrick Monahan performs all over the UK and Europe and has appeared in far-flung hotspots including Dubai, Bahrain and Costa Rica. Very much in demand, performing hundreds of shows a year, [www.ents24.com](http://www.ents24.com) placed Patrick 2nd in the 'Top 20 Hardest Working UK Comedians List 2017'. In 2015 he won the Stand Up For Labour Act of the Year comedy award, which is voted for by audience members at the events. His many TV appearances include *Weekend* (ITV) *Safeword* (ITV2) *Celebrity Squares* (ITV) *Fake Reaction* (ITV2) and *The One Show Edinburgh Festival* (BBC1). Monahan's new stand-up show *Rewind Selector 90s* is about what life was like growing up in Britain during the 1990's as an Irish/Iranian immigrant whose family had come over from Iran a decade earlier. As identity cards and 'Cool Britannia' were being introduced, Monahan found himself on the periphery as a teenager - trying to blend in but ending up with all the other ethnic groups!

<http://www.patrickmonahan.co.uk>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/ydgb9he7>

### Phil Nichol

[@philnichol](#)

Phil Nichol is an award-winning Canadian comedian, singer-songwriter and actor. Phil began the new material night Old Rope, now produced by 2016 Funny Women Awards mentor Tiff Stevenson. Phil played a member of the production team in Rob Brydon's *Annually Retentive* and has appeared on *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* and *The Graham Norton Show*. He also played Terry Gilliam in the BBC adaptation of *Holy Flying Circus* and is currently starring as Hugo in the West End show [Everybody's Talking About Jamie](#). He begins his solo comedy tour *Your Wrong* in September –

[philnichol.com/your-wrong/](http://philnichol.com/your-wrong/)

<http://www.philnichol.com>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/y9anam76>

## **Sindhu Vee**

[@sindhufunny](#)

Sindhu performed her first ever gig in 2012 at the Funny Women Award's heats – making it to the semi-finals and then, a year later, to the finals. In 2016, she was a finalist in the BBC New Comedy Awards, and was a runner-up in the 2017 Leicester New Comedian of the Year and New Act of the Year Awards (NATYS). Host of the BBC podcast *Comedy of the Week*, Sindhu's radio and TV credits include BBC Radio 4's *Museum of Curiosity*, *The Now Show* and *Woman's Hour 70th Birthday Party* and Alan Davies' *As Yet Untitled* for Dave.

<http://www.sindhuee.com/#Home>

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/y7ynuzbt>

## **Gemma Whelan**

[@WhelanGemma](#)

British actress and comedian Gemma Whelan is known for her varied body of work. Gemma was last seen in critically acclaimed dark comedy *The End of the F\*\*\*ing World* on Channel 4 and Netflix opposite Alex Lawther and Jessica Barden. Last year Gemma reprised the role of Yara Greyjoy in series seven of *Game of Thrones* on HBO in the US and Sky Atlantic in the UK. In 2016 Gemma was nominated for a Screen Actors Guild Award (SAG) with her fellow *Game of Thrones* cast members, for 'Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series'. As a comedian Gemma created and often performs as character Chastity Butterworth. Gemma brought the character to series three of *Live at the Electric* for BBC 3 and in 2014 recorded a pilot chat show for BBC Radio 4 called *The Chastity Butterworth Show*. This was followed up by an episode of the comedy chat show on BBC Radio 4 in 2017. In 2010 Gemma won a Funny Women Variety Award for her stand up comedy.

**Image:** <https://tinyurl.com/ybldopqv>

## **Notes to editors:**

This year [Funny Women](#) has a new charity partner, [UN Women National Committee UK](#), and, inspired by UN Women's renowned **HeForShe** solidarity movement for gender equality, the eight 2017 Stage Award finalists will be mentored by well-known comedians,

male and female. This follows 2016's successful pairing of the finalists with celebrity female comedians, including **Sara Pascoe, Ellie Taylor, Jan Ravens, Zoe Lyons, Tiffany Stevenson** and **Shazia Mirza**.

**Laura Haynes, Chair, UN Women National Committee UK said:** "We are delighted to confirm the Funny Women Awards as one of our signature events for HeForShe London Arts Week 2018 in support of UN Women. We know that the only way to achieve real change is to influence culture. The arts guide and reflect culture by helping people to re-think established norms and explore challenging topics in a thoughtful way. And laughter, when shared, can help to unite people. As well as making us laugh, the Funny Women Awards will be helping to open minds and encourage action."

## **Judging Panel**

The judging panel for the Stage Award will be chaired by Funny Women founder, Lynne Parker, and comprises of:

Richard Bucknall, RBM; James Farrell, Head of Comedy Development, BBC Studios; Harriet Gibsone, Deputy Editor, Guardian Guide; Morwenna Gordon, Commissioning Editor Comedy, Sky; Lee Griffiths, Associate Producer, Soho Theatre; Ayesha Hazarika, Writer and Performer; Sharon Lougher, Head of Features, Metro; Ade Rawcliffe – Head of Diversity - ITV Commissioning; Rachel Springett, Commissioning Editor, Channel 4 Comedy.

## **Partners & sponsors:**

The 2017 Funny Women Awards have been made possible with the support of a number of partners and sponsors including Comedy Central, Sky, ITV, Why Did the Chicken, Women in Comedy Festival, Soho Theatre, Women's Radio Station, Oliver Bonas, Starling Bank and MOO.

## **Useful links:**

**Previous charity work by Funny Women and looking ahead to working with UN Women:**

<http://funnywomen.com/about/charity/>

**Previous winners and finalists of the Funny Women Awards:**

<http://funnywomen.com/2012/10/01/funny-women-awards-all-the-winners-and-finalists-ever/>

**Find out more about Funny Women:**

Images for 2017 Final: <https://tinyurl.com/y9759m2y>

Images of former finalists 2003 - 2016: <http://tinyurl.com/zh4mu4e>

Images of 2016 Finalists and mentors: <http://tinyurl.com/jkv2l95>

**Website:** [www.funnywomen.com](http://www.funnywomen.com)

**Twitter:** [@funnywomen](https://twitter.com/funnywomen)

**Hashtag:** #FWAwards2017

**Find out more about HeForShe and UN Women National Committee UK:**

**Website:** [www.unwomenuk.org](http://www.unwomenuk.org) and [www.heforshe.org](http://www.heforshe.org)

**Twitter:** [@unwomenuk](https://twitter.com/unwomenuk)

**Hashtags:** #ArtsWeekLDN #HeForShe

**Full listing:**

**Venue:** Duchess Theatre, Catherine Street, London, WC2B 5LA

**Nearest tube:** Covent Garden or Temple

**Date:** Monday 12 March

**Time:** 7.30pm (doors open at 7pm)

**Duration:** 2.5 hours including interval

**Tickets:** £21.25 (all tickets include a £1.25 Theatre Restoration Levy)

**Booking link:** <https://www.nimaxtheatres.com/shows/funny-women-awards-final/>

**Tel:** 0330 333 4810

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