

Glossary

I mean	quiero decir
rescheduled	reprogramada
cut off (the phone)	línea cortada
go ahead	proceder
put up with	aguantar
chirpy	muy alegre
boils down to	significa en realidad
thoroughly	rigurosamente/a fondo
arresting personality	personalidad fuerte
pitching up (a tent)	poner (una tienda)
in all likelihood	lo mas probable
wrapped around his finger	prendido en sus dedos
playing/performing	actua en directo
gruelling	muy muy duro
(24 nights) in a row	seguidas
make or break you	lograrlo o morir
knackered	echa polvo
nipped away to	fue rapido a
to top it all off	coronar/rematar
looking forward to	deseando
taken with	quedarse encantado con
alguno	
hanging on (his every word)	prestando mucha atención a
our roaming ways	tendencia a viajar
often mean	suele significar
adamant	se insiste
anything juicy	algo muy interesante y
divertido	
euphemism	eufemismo
turns into	se convierte
juicy	jugoso
gems	joyas
likeability factor	la capacidad de asegurar
que les cae bien a los	demás
crafty fecker	tio taimado(argot)
goss (gossip)	cotilleo(argot)
makes your week	te alegra la semana

CHEEKY CHAPPY

Niamh Lynch chats up the nicest comedian in the world before his gig in Madrid this month

Craig Hill is a nice man. A very nice man. I mean, most people who have their interview rescheduled three times, get cut off when it does go ahead and then have to put up with a terrible telephone connection and a screaming drunk (a passer-by, not me!) would be a little tense by the time we got down to business, but not Craig. The charming Scotsman even managed a chirpy “hola” when he answered the phone, because the poor chap was expecting a husky-voiced Spaniard rather than a squeaky Irish girl.

He was exactly what I was expecting though, because everywhere you see his name written, it’s accompanied by the words “sweet,” “lovely,” “super-friendly” or the really worrying “cheeky chappy.” What that all boils down to is a man so thoroughly likeable that you could happily introduce him to your granny. Ok, the experience might start out a little bumpy, given Craig’s arresting personality (“Scotland On Sunday” once described him as ‘camper than a big camp of campers pitching up their pink sparkly tents’) and trademark leather kilt, but in all likelihood he’d soon have Gran wrapped around his little finger, making him cups of tea and cozying down to discuss the best strategies for removing smudges from your PVC.

Craig is playing the Giggling Guiri on 12 October, but it won’t be his first time in Spain. In fact, he’s just back from holidays in Mallorca, where he went to recover from his gruelling run at the Edinburgh Festival. Craig says that though he loves it (it sounds a whole lot like a month-long party to me) and it’s great practise (performing in the company of the world’s best comedians for 24 nights in a row will either make you or break you, after all), he was knackered afterwards and nipped away to the lovely Balearics for some R&R. He has performed in both Barcelona and Madrid before, and to top it all off once had an exotic Spanish *novio* by the name of Jesús.

The Scottish comedian is especially looking forward to playing Madrid because as well as loving the city, he is a big fan of expat audiences. In fact, he was so taken with the audiences the last time he played here that he describes his previous Spanish experiences as being “practically therapy.” He believes that us expats are starved of both our home culture and comedy in general and as a result make pathetically appreciative audiences, hanging on his every word and gratefully offering up our darkest secrets to be turned into comedy gold. He also says that his accent, though not all his fans are Scottish, reminds most people of something from home and that plus his love of meeting new people and hearing interesting stories means that emigrants make for great audiences. Craig also mentioned that our roaming ways often mean that expats have far more interesting lives than their home-bound compatriots, which is very important seeing as how Craig is adamant that his most important prop is “the audience itself”.

He told me that the importance of the audience actually increases as his comedy style has evolved. Through the years, he has become much more spontaneous and now spends a lot more stage time improvising, using what the audience gives him rather than pre-prepared material. He says that the members of the audience “become his characters” and that’s why they are so important: if they don’t give him anything juicy, he has no material to work with. It’s also where his “lovely personality” comes into play (and by the way, the quote marks are to indicate that I know it’s a cliché, not my mother’s euphemism for “hideously ugly”). As he told me himself, an audience that doesn’t trust and like him is unlikely to offer up the personal gems — but if that happens, he can always use the ones fans send to his blog (<http://www.mrcraighill.com/blog.php>), which he then turns into the show. As he was told by a friend at the very start of his career, you can never underestimate “the likeability factor” when it comes to getting the most from your audience. Craig says that after many shows, people tell him that they feel like he is their new best friend, which is precisely what the crafty fecker is aiming for — after all, who’ll give you more goss than your best mate?

In fact, you’d have to be fairly sure of your own likeability factor to call your show “Craig Hill Makes Your Whole Week,” but Mr. Hill has no reason not to be. Not only has he presented TV programmes, sold out gig after gig, been invited back to the Edinburgh Festival for nine years in a row AND hosted his own radio show, but he was also told at a recent gig that he was “better than an epidural.” Now if that’s not praise, I don’t know what is.

.....

For comments, suggestions, or to report an error, please contact didactic@in-madrid.com



Q

Try to answer these questions based on the story

- 1) Who was Craig expecting to interview him?
- 2) Where did Craig go on holiday after the Edinburgh Festival?
- 3) How many years in a row has Craig performed at the Edinburgh Festival?
- 4) Why is Craig excited about performing in Madrid?
- 5) What, according to Craig, is so great about expats?
- 6) How has Craig’s style changed over the years?
- 7) List all the adjectives that have been used to describe Craig.
- 8) What else has Craig done other than perform live?