

UTV's 'Secrets of the Comedy Circuit' has been picked up by the UK's freshest streaming service ITVX

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All four episodes are now available to watch.

First commissioned and aired by UTV in late 2022, the episodes were filmed in front of a live audience in the Belfast Empire Music Hall during their 'Empire Laughs Back Comedy Club' nights, now celebrating 30 years.

The series showcases the vibrant Northern Ireland comedy scene, with the best local talent and other stand-up artists from further afield, all of which brings giggles and belly laughs as they share their unique observations.

Comedy clubs are seen as a rite of passage for comedians from all over the UK and Ireland. Stars such as Kevin Bridges, Romesh Ranganathan and Sarah Millican along with famous locals Paddy Kielty, Colin Murphy and Paddy Raff have cut their teeth at the Empire Laughs Back Comedy Club.

The four episodes capture highlights of a typical 'comedy club' night but also delve into the lives of the comedians behind the scenes. Each evening is hosted by a well-known face who joins the rest of the cast off stage to chat about what it's like trying to survive the circuit!

In the first episode Belfast comedian Paddy McDonnell is our MC. He's joined by local actress and comedian Diona Doherty, Kildare native Emman Idama, and Belfast's Paddy Raff. In following episodes the eclectic mix continues with Colin Murphy and Andrew Ryan hosting and introducing acts from England, Wales and Scotland, as well as local talent.

UTV's Programmes Editor Tony Curry said, "The series went down really well with local audiences and we're delighted it's now available to watch here on demand, but is also reaching a much wider audience across the UK".

Simon Clemison, Head of News and Programmes at UTV said, "A comedy commission was a new venture for us but with so many great acts on the scene in Belfast we knew we were onto a winner. The streaming service hit more than one billion streams last week, with more new shows for free than anywhere else."

'Secrets of the Comedy Circuit' is produced for UTV by Belfast-based Moondog Productions.

Episode guest details

Ep 1 - Paddy McDonnell (host), Diona Doherty, Emman Idama, Paddy Raff.

Ep 2 - Colin Murphy (host), Jojo Sutherland, Tadiwa Mahlunge, Micky Bartlett

Ep 3 - Andrew Ryan (host), Teresa Livingstone, Lloyd Griffith, William Thompson

Ep 4 - Andrew Ryan (host), Johnny Bow, Ger Staunton, Ciaran Bartlett

[end]

About ITVX

Launched in late 2022, ITVX is UK's freshest streaming service, letting viewers stream new programme exclusives, with adverts, for free; ranging from premium dramas, documentaries, US series, comedy and reality shows to blockbuster films and much, much more. ITVX is the first streaming service in the UK to offer viewers the flexibility to access free content with ads and ad-free paid subscription, all in one place. Paying subscribers also have access to BritBox UK. ITVX live streams must-watch events, from live sport to Love Island, as they are broadcast on ITV's channels. ITVX also offers an ever-changing host of exclusive themed channels in line with viewer preferences and popularity; these constantly evolving pop-up channels provide a scheduled experience through a streaming service.

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