



Press release: 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018

## **SKY ARTS UNCOVERS INCREDIBLE STORIES INSPIRED BY THE WORLDS OF ARTS, CULTURE AND ROCK N ROLL WITH A NEW SEASON OF 'URBAN MYTHS' FOR 2018**

**All episodes available on demand from 12<sup>th</sup> April as well as on Sky Arts and TV streaming service NOW TV at 9pm  
RT: 8 x 30 minutes**

Sky Arts successful series Urban Myths returns to our screens in April 2018 with a new season of mischievous comedies about bizarre tales from the worlds of Hollywood, music, arts and literature which are all fictionalised accounts of mostly true events.

Among the four new episodes of Urban Myths announced today, we can expect to unravel the mysterious disappearance of Agatha Christie in 1926 and the biggest ever manhunt staged in Britain at that time; go behind the scenes on the set of the iconic film 'Some Like it Hot;' go backstage at Live Aid and sympathise with Johnny Cash and the carnage wrought by a killer ostrich.

These will join the four episodes already announced - revisiting TV presenter Bill Grundy on the ill-fated day when he met the Sex Pistols; fathoming the creative drug fuelled pairing of Salvador Dali and Alice Cooper; taking a peek at David Bowie and Marc Bolan in their decorator overalls and eavesdropping on an unexpected car-share with Public Enemy.

**Gemma Arterton, Adam Brody, Adrian Edmondson, Noel Fielding, Sheila Hancock, Bill Paterson, Alex Pettyfer, Frank Skinner, Dougray Scott, David Suchet, Luke Treadaway and Jack Whitehall** are just some of the well known names starring in Urban Myths. The series also features members from the National Youth Theatre performing alongside established actors such as **Daniel Mays, Steve Pemberton and Kayvan Novak.**

Each of the eight episodes takes an inventive look at remarkable events, which are re-imagined with tongue firmly in cheek by some of Britain's most talented writers and directors. A third series of Urban Myths is already in the works featuring a new line up of comedies which will be announced later this year.

**Phil Edgar-Jones**, Director of Sky Arts, says: "We are thrilled to be bringing Urban Myths back to Sky Arts in April 2018. With the first season we knew we'd hit comedy gold, mining the madcap worlds of urban folklore and once again viewers will get to see some of Britain's most talented actors, writers and directors bring a selection of terrific tales, mostly true, to life. The episodes will be airing weekly on Sky Arts, but will also all be available on demand, perfect for binge-

watching!”

## URBAN MYTHS SYNOPSES

### Urban Myths: Johnny Cash and the Ostrich

It's November, 1983. Jean, a hotel manageress in Nottingham, arrives at work to find there's trouble in room 211, currently occupied by country music legend, Johnny Cash. Eventually persuading him to let her in, they sit amongst the carnage and Cash explains that he has been visited by Waldo, the killer ostrich. In a series of flashbacks, Cash tells Jean how the ostrich attacked him at his theme park, home, The House of Cash in Tennessee, back in '81 and how that set him on a path of pain-killer addiction and reckless drinking. Now Waldo has turned up in the East Midlands and is aching for revenge.

Starring **Frank Skinner** (Johnny Cash) and **Isy Suttie** (Jean). Written by Frank Skinner. Directed by Al Campbell.

Produced by Avalon.

### Urban Myths: Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie's mysterious 11 day disappearance in 1926 gripped the nation and set off one of the biggest manhunts ever mounted. In desperation, Britain's most famous crime writers of the time, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Dorothy L. Sayers, were drafted in to help the search. As they took matters into their own hands with their contrasting methods of detection, this was the beginning of crime's most unlikely investigative partnership: Sayers and Conan Doyle, together at last and on the hunt for Agatha Christie.

Starring **Anna Maxwell Martin** (Agatha Christie), **Bill Paterson** (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle), **Rosie Cavaliero** (Dorothy L. Sayers), **Adrian Scarborough** (Inspector Danders) and **Robert James-Collier** (Colonel Archie Christie). Written by Paul Doolan and Abigail Wilson. Directed by Guillem Morales. Produced by John Rushton. Executive Producers Lucy Lumsden and Lucy Ansbro. Produced by Yellow Door Productions.

### Urban Myths: Marilyn Monroe and Billy Wilder

One of Marilyn Monroe's most iconic roles was undoubtedly that of singer and ukulele player Sugar 'Kane' Kowalczyk in the 1959 romantic comedy *Some Like It Hot*. It is regarded as one of the greatest comedy films of all time but, behind the scenes, America's sweetheart is struggling to deliver a line. Marilyn runs to Arthur Miller and Paula Strasberg for reassurance, leaving Billy Wilder tearing his hair out and Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon making side-bets. On the forty-seventh take, Marilyn nails it: "It's me. Sugar!"

Starring **Gemma Arterton** (Marilyn Monroe), **James Purefoy** (Billy Wilder), **Alex Pettyfer** (Tony Curtis), **Adam Brody** (Jack Lemmon), **Felicity Montagu** (Paula Strasberg) **Dougray Scott** (Arthur Miller) and **Irfan Shamji** (Clapperboard Guy). Written by David Cummings. Directed by Sean Foley. Produced by Zoe Rocha and Little Rock Pictures

### Urban Myths: Backstage at Live Aid

Live Aid was not only “the day rock’n ’roll changed the world”, it was also the source of countless backstage music industry rumours. Backstage at Live Aid is a reimagined story that takes place behind the scenes on that unforgettable summer’s afternoon in 1985 as egos clash, hair is sprayed, double denim is completely acceptable and Bob Geldof and long-time personal assistant Marsha Hunt struggle to keep control of the most famous faces of the 80s.

Starring **Jonas Armstrong** (Bob Geldof), **Kerry Howard** (Marsha Hunt), **Martin Compston** (Midge Ure), **David Avery** (Freddie Mercury), **Rufus Jones** (Elton John), **Seb Cardinal** (Ric Parfitt), **Dustin Demi-Burns** (Francis Rossi), **Karla Crome** (Sade) and **Con O’Neill** (Tony). Written by Neil Forsyth. Directed by John Hardwick. Produced by Little Rock Pictures.

### Urban Myths: The Sex Pistols vs. Bill Grundy

This is the reimagined story behind The Sex Pistols’ infamous appearance on Bill Grundy’s show in 1976, a year before their legendary debut album *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here’s the Sex Pistols* was released. The foul-mouthed encounter catapulted The Sex Pistols into the public eye and signalled the arrival of mainstream punk, while simultaneously destroying Grundy’s career – and all because of a last minute cancellation by Freddie Mercury.

Starring **Daniel Mays** (Mike Housego), **Steve Pemberton** (Bill Grundy), **Kieran Hodgson** (Malcolm McLaren), **Kayvan Novak** (Freddie Mercury) **Frankie Fox** (Johnny Rotten) and cast members from the National Youth Theatre. Written by Simon Nye. Directed by Simon Delaney. Produced by Spelthorne Community TV.

### Urban Myths: The Dali and the Cooper

Facilitated in suitably surreal fashion by Alice Cooper’s agent Shep Gordon and Salvador Dali’s wife Gala, this is the incredible true story of a fascinating and weird few days in 1970s New York between the artist and his new found muse; one which led to the creation an extraordinary work of art involving a chocolate éclair and a brain.

Starring **Noel Fielding** (Alice Cooper), **David Suchet** (Salvador Dali), **Paul Kaye** (Shep Gordon) and **Sheila Hancock** (Gala Dali) with guest performance by **Serge Pizzorno** and music by **Jarvis Cocker** and **Richard Hawley**. Written by Roger Drew and Ed Dyson. Directed by Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard. Produced by Richard Yee and Krishnendu Majumdar for Me & You Productions.

### Urban Myths: David Bowie and Marc Bolan

It’s the swinging 60s and teenagers David and Marc are yet to hit the big time. In fact, such is their lack of success they are costing their manager Les Conn money. So in lieu of payment the two spend an afternoon painting Les’s Soho office, an event which will springboard a lifelong friendship between the two young men who will eventually be known around the world as music legends David Bowie and Marc Bolan.

Starring **Jack Whitehall** (Marc Bolan), **Luke Treadaway** (David Bowie) and **Ade Edmonson** (Les Conn). Written by Freddy Syborn. Directed by Jim O'Hanlon. Produced by Lion TV.

#### Urban Myths: Public Enemy

Multimillionaire rap legends Public Enemy are stranded, desperately trying to get to their gig in Sheffield. With time running out, their knight in shining armour arrives in the form of Kev, an unassuming local and huge Public Enemy fan who offers the heralded Flavor Flav and Chuck D a lift in his Ford Focus. Cue a funny and thought-provoking road trip set against a soundtrack of Bohemian Rhapsody.

Starring **Philip Glenister** (Kev, the local guy), **Paterson Joseph** (Chuck D), **Abdul Salis** (Flavor Flav). Written by Neil Webster. Directed by Ben Palmer. Produced by Happy Tramp.

**-ENDS-**

#### **Notes to Editors**

The full season will be on linear TX at 9pm on 12<sup>th</sup> April on Sky Arts and TV Streaming service NOW TV. All all eight episodes available on demand on Sky .

Running order (weekly at 9pm):

April 12 - Marilyn Monroe and Billy Wilder

April 19 - Backstage at Live Aid

April 26 - Johnny Cash and the ostrich

May 3 - The Dali and the Cooper

May 10 - David Bowie and Marc Bolan

May 17 - Agatha Christie

May 24 - Public Enemy

May 31 - Sex Pistols Vs. Bill Grundy

Full cast lists available on request.

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#### **About Sky Arts**

Sky Arts is the UK's only dedicated channel for the arts. It offers something for everyone, whatever their passion, with entertaining programmes showcasing the best of classical and popular music, theatre, opera, dance and the visual arts, as well as original drama and comedy. Sky Arts is broadcast 24 hours a day and has over 1,000 hours available on catch-up TV, including flagship programmes such as Portrait Artist of The Year, Landscape Artist of the Year and The South Bank Show.

The channel is committed to supporting the arts by investing in the best talent, both on and off screen, as well as through exclusive partnerships with major UK and European cultural institutions, including National Theatre Live, Tate and The British Library.

Sky is Europe's leading entertainment company, serving 22.5 million customers across seven countries - UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain and Switzerland. The company has annual revenues of £12.9 billion and is Europe's leading investor in television content with annual programming spend of over £6 billion. Sky has over 31,000 employees and is listed as one of The Times Top 50 employers for women. Sky is listed on the London Stock Exchange (SKY).