

About Shortis & Simpson

John Shortis writes songs and scripts, plays keyboard, and spends hours reading newspapers and delving into libraries and archives.

Moya Simpson sings, mimics accents, plays characters, and has a passion for Eastern European music.

Their combined skills make up Shortis and Simpson, producers, writers and performers of productions and projects that are always surprising, original, innovative and wide in their range of styles and genres.

Based in Canberra, they specialise in shows that reflect Australian history and politics in a way that is funny, satirical and informative, with the odd gut-wrenching moment.

They perform regularly at Canberra's national cultural institutions, regularly do seasons of political satire, and run two world music choirs.

This year they had sell-out seasons of up-to-the minute political satire in *A Liberal Dose of Shortis and Simpson*, and Christmas revue in *The Three Scrooges* with Peter J Casey, directed by Carissa Campbell.

"...their satirical verbal arrows are not only very funny, but unerringly accurate at finding their targets.... extraordinary singer/songwriter talents of Canberra's dynamic cabaret duo of Shortis and Simpson... two impeccable performers....sharply observed, topical, and very funny songs and sketches.....brilliantly conceived and highly relevant...."

About Moya Simpson

Moya Simpson, singer, actor, comedian, leader of voice workshops and choirs, discovered she could sing in 1984. Since then she has carved out a career built upon her extraordinary vocal versatility, comic timing and energetic delivery of whatever she takes on.

She's sung songs of the Balkans in *Mesana Salata* and *Martenitsa*, toured for Musica Viva in acappella group *Girls In Your Town* with Mara Kiek, Jarnie Birmingham and Margret RoadKnight, and trained with British singer and voice specialist Frankie Armstrong to develop her own voice workshop skills.

Her comedy cabaret persona emerged when she was a member of *Bishop and the Actresses* with Margret RoadKnight, Kerry-Ella MaCaullay and John Shortis in the early '90s. This led to performances at the School of Arts Café in Queanbeyan, and eventually the emergence of Shortis and Simpson as a comedy cabaret act.

She has toured her one-woman show, *Close Your Eyes and Think of England* throughout Australia, and her autobiographical show, *Big Voice*, won a Canberra Critics' Circle Award in 2009.

She runs a community world music choir, Worldly Goods, which has just celebrated its 13th birthday.

"...innately glamorous, blessed with superb diction and a wicked sense of humour, Simpson is the mistress of innuendo..... she has the capacity to say as much with a raised eyebrow as a lyric....Simpson is remarkable.....thrilling the audience with the

sheer octave-powered energy of the sliding sounds of the mesmerising yodel....you've heard nothing till you've heard the phenomenal Simpson singMoya Simpson's stunning vocal versatility from the blues to the bossa nova or country and western to samba.... it is Simpson the actor who shines... bringing the house to the verge of tears....'

About John Shortis

John Shortis has worked full-time as a composer, songwriter, musician, scriptwriter and music historian since 1971.

He has written hundreds of songs for children, worked freelance for the ABC as a scriptwriter for music broadcasts, has been a television scriptwriter for Channel Ten, written the music for countless theatre productions (for companies such as Nimrod, Tasmanian Puppet Theatre, Dance Company of NSW, Patch Theatre), directed several community music-theatre projects, written the music for an opera, an orchestral suite for the Adelaide symphony Orchestra, and had three composer-in-residence positions.

His songs have been recorded by a number of artists including Margret RoadKnight, Jeannie Lewis, Franciscus Henri, the cast of Playschool, and Rolf Harris.

As half of Shortis and Simpson, he writes and performs cabaret shows that feature his political satire, and reflect his interest in Australian history.

Awarded a Harold White Fellowship at the National Library of Australia in 1997, he researched the sheet music collection, which resulted in a series of shows (Sheet Dip in 1998, Tin Pan Aussie in 2010/11, and an exhibition, Between the Sheets, which toured Australia 2003-5. In 2008 he received a fellowship at the Australian Prime Ministers' Centre, which has lead to Prime Time.

"...Shortis has a seemingly bottomless well of ideas and a rare ability to range across styles....a true rarity...sophisticated....whimsical and witty....accomplished and tasteful writing...brilliant Australian writer....his funny lyrics brim with outrageously skewed rhymes.....laser-honed approach balancing irony, sarcasm and the sardonic with an air of innocence..... the stinging wit of John Shortis's dart-sharp lyrics, piercing the bulls-eye of political chicanery... Shortis is a songwriter of consummate skill, as adept at a swift jibe at Little Johnny as he is at a moving tribute to the courage of the ordinary Aussie battler...."