

# Q&A with *Puppet Guy* Conrad Koch

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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Top South African ventriloquist and award-winning performer Conrad Koch is back at The Baxter Theatre in Cape Town from 3-14 April 2018 in a brand new show *Puppet Guy* along with his famous puppet comrade Chester Missing.

The much-anticipated *Puppet Guy* is billed as Koch's most fun show to date, with a roller coaster ride of outrageous puppet characters and off-the-wall comedy ventriloquism. It's seen as a change of pace from Koch's previously highly political work on stage – focusing on hilarious characters, funny observations, and world-class entertainment.

I caught up with Koch mid-sentence, last week.



## ■ ***When are you happiest?***

Wow, Martin, you went deep fast. I'm happiest when I make peace with where my life is at versus where I expect my life to be. But now I sound like a Huletts Sugar packet. Also, when my wife, my dogs, and I are zoning out, or when I do good work I feel proud of, or when I'm eating Nik Naks. Carbs are happy until they are not.

## ■ ***What does comedy mean to you?***

Any performance that leads to laughter I suppose. It includes a licence to disregard social norms, within certain parameters, a socially accepted mandate to have performative fun. Also, in South Africa, any situation involving the word 'Gupta'.

## ■ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

That's a tough one. There's more than one. The magic when a creative idea comes together in some puppet mayhem that nobody has ever seen before, a sense of delight. I have a hoodie that I turn into a DJ puppet, where I DJ with my toes. It's insanely fun. On TV with Chester Missing, it's the opportunity to say ridiculous things to powerful people, or really to just engage with movers and shakers with so little regard for holy cows.

## ■ ***What drives you: ego or humility?***

That is a ridiculous model for why we do things. It's a balancing act between my ego's desire for validation and a deeper desire for self-actualisation. It's hard to avoid the ego-rub success in comedy gives, but if you live for it...

▣ ***Your heroes?***

Comedy heroes: Kagiso Lediga, Dave Chappelle, Nina Conti.

Hero heroes: Steve Biko, Rick Turner, Buddha, Cheech & Chong... how do you answer something like that?

▣ ***It's your round what are you drinking?***

Spiced Gold and Coke Zero. Or water.

▣ ***What makes you stand out?***

I'm a double International Emmy-nominated ventriloquist with an MA in social anthropology who uses his puppet to talk to actual politicians. I make a puppet live on stage out of two feather dusters and a slipper. I use Snapchat and a projector to turn an audience member into a puppet. I'm a ventriloquist from Africa. I like to believe something in there stands out. Your call. I feel like such a pretentious chop answering that question.

▣ ***You have a chance to put up a billboard with your picture on it, what do you say on it?***

Spot the dummy.

▣ ***Nicknames?***

People call me Chester Missing. I've even booked into hotel rooms under his name.



Image by Sarah Isaacs

❑ ***If you were not a funny guy, what would you do?***

Lawyer probably.

❑ ***Pick five words to describe yourself?***

Evasive about answering silly questions.

❑ ***What comic changed your life?***

Comic? *The Far Side* by Gary Larson.

❑ ***What is your favourite word?***

Halala.

### 🎪 *Favourite fashion garment?*

My cap. I am aware it borders on cheesy, but my hair is *swak*.

### 🎪 *On stage, I tend to?*

Talk to myself.

### 🎪 *Where would you like to be right now?*

The Saxonwold Shebeen.

*Puppet Guy runs at The Baxter Theatre in Cape Town from 3-14 April, tickets available via [Webtickets](#) and from from 25 April to 27 May at the Studio Theatre at Montecasino in Joburg, tickets available at [Computicket](#).*

## Social media links

[@conradkoch](#)

[@chestermissing](#)

FB: [Mr Chester Missing](#)

YouTube: [Chester Missing](#)

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