Dougie interviews international superstar ‘Hans’ in new radio role

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An Adelaide artist who was one of the world’s first IVF quintuplets and lives with cerebral palsy is reaching for the stars in his new role as a radio presenter.

Dougie Jacobssen is a visual and performing artist with Tutti Arts, an award-winning NDIS provider, which supports people with disabilities in their careers as artists.

Dougie, 34, has performed on stage for many years and is a regular guest on ABC Radio.

And he’s now applying his communication skills to another role - programmer and presenter on Radio Tutti, a recently-launched radio station, run by people with disabilities.

Dougie and his team have interviewed several high profile Australian personalities, including children’s entertainer and musician Peter Combe and former Channel 7 newsreader John Riddell.

And recently he interviewed a very different guest - internationally successful performer, Hans, aka Matt Gilberton, whose effervescent onstage persona is a gay German accordionist.

Hans, who is a regular at Adelaide’s Fringe festival and on Australia’s TV morning shows, was the first Australian to make it to the live finals of America’s Got Talent where he wowed the judges.

“I often hear Dougie when he is featured on Peter Goers' evening program on Radio Adelaide and he is a big character, so I was very excited to be interviewed by him!"

Dougie and a group of artists with learning and intellectual disabilities interviewed Hans in Adelaide on Radio Tutti, now streaming 24/7 and available through Tutti’s website.

Dougie has trained and worked with Tutti since leaving high school. He has sold several art works, performed professionally in most of Tutti’s award-winning theatre productions, and is a member of the celebrated Tutti Choir.

He is a public spokesperson for Tutti and has received a community service award for his outstanding work promoting the artistic development of people with a disability.

“Dougie is an amazing man. He’s a very creative thinker, and highly tuned in to what’s happening in the world,” said Tutti CEO Pat Rix.

The NDIS supports Dougie’s career in the visual and performing arts through his NDIS plan, which gives him access to Tutti’s arts programs.

It also provides several other supports, including physiotherapy and Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding, which Dougie uses to live in shared accommodation with friends.

Dougie has assistive equipment and technology, including a wheelchair for when he needs it and, more recently, a computer to access Tutti’s online programs. He also has a NDIS support worker who helps him to attend events, including his favourite concerts.

“It makes me feel pretty happy about that,” said Dougie. “I think it’s excellent, fantastic, if it wasn’t for the NDIS I don’t know honestly what I would do.”

In 1986, Dougie Jacobssen and his four brothers made headlines as the world’s first IVF quintuplets, born in London at only 26 weeks’ gestation. Dougie was the last to be born. Weighing only 836 grams, he suffered two collapsed lungs and was lucky to survive.

As a result of his complicated birth, Dougie lives with cerebral palsy, left hemiplegia (paralysis), and epilepsy. He has a VP shunt, which drains excess fluid to relieve pressure on his brain.

But Dougie says his disabilities don’t slow him down in the pursuit of his goals.

“Oh God no!” said Dougie. “I’m an artist and I’m a very happy person and there’s nothing I can’t do,” he said. “I’m an out there person, helping other artists perform. I often tell people Tutti is my family. I work every day, if I had to stop I don’t know what I would do, I just love my job.”

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