



Lily Allen during her *West End Girl* tour in Los Angeles. PHOTO: GETTY

# LILY ALLEN LANDS IN A TIGHT SPOT

**Show-stopper** The singer has defended her lateness and her performance's brevity, writes Eric Williams.

Lily Allen has defended charging fans £86 (\$165) to sit at the back of a stadium to watch her perform for less than an hour. The British singer, whose album *West End Girl* was released last October, has been touring Europe since March. She faced criticism online following her recent London dates, after she arrived on stage at the O2 at 9.10pm and left by 10pm.

The singer has now claimed she was "a few minutes late" because her "tights were laddered" and she "had to change them".

Rupert Hawksley, *The Spectator's* opinion editor, wrote online: "Lily Allen at The O2. No support act. Arrived on stage at 9.10pm. All wrapped up by 10pm. Not one word to the audience. £86 to sit in the gods."

Within hours, Allen responded on X, saying she was "extremely proud" of the *West End Girl* tour and that she didn't "want anyone to feel ripped off".

"There is a support act. The show has always been advertised as 'Lily Allen performs *West End Girl*,'" she said.

Allen is touring with the string orchestra Dallas Minor Trio, which plays songs from Allen's discography as the lyrics are played on a screen, encouraging the audience to sing along.

"The show is just over an hour as it's just the album in its entirety. It's my artistic choice not to talk to the audience; the fourth wall helps with the storytelling. Most people find it to be effective," Allen said.

*West End Girl* is Allen's fifth studio album, and the singer last went on tour in 2018. The latest album followed her high-profile split last year from David Harbour, the *Stranger Things* actor. The songs depicted an unflattering image of an open marriage gone wrong.

Harbour, who was married to Allen for four years, responded to the songs in an interview with *Variety* last month, saying: "Stories are complex, and that's why I say I

respect her creation of art to channel her experience. It wasn't my experience."

Allen, a mother of two, previously said she had "wanted to die" following the breakdown of the relationship and had checked herself into a trauma clinic.

Speaking to *Vogue* in October, she said the songs were "inspired by what went on in the relationship", but added: "That's not to say that it's all gospel."

Harbour, 51, has chosen to maintain his silence regarding details shared by Allen in her songs, including her description of finding sex toys hidden in a carrier bag from a chemist in the marital bedroom.

Speaking last year, Allen insisted there were "a lot of good things" about her relationship with Harbour, and said Ethel and Marnie, her daughters from her first marriage, had "had an amazing experience living in America for five years".

In the album's title track, the singer recounts a phone call in which a husband tells his wife, from the other side of the Atlantic, that he wants to open up their marriage while she is working in London.

In August 2021, almost a year after Harbour and Allen married, Allen made her critically acclaimed *West End* debut in the supernatural thriller *2:22 A Ghost Story*, in which she played the lead role and was nominated for an Olivier Award.

The album's lyrics suggest that this was when the couple's pledge of monogamy was challenged. **W**

THE TELEGRAPH

## From page 36 Online dating scams: When swiping's not right

webform. Because the architecture made it impossible to pass. This is not an app but infrastructure – a shared enforcement layer that sits beneath dating platforms the same way payment rails sit beneath banking. Platforms retain their user experience. The trust layer is embedded beneath it.

I make no excuses for my binary point of view when it comes to solving this global safety issue.

If mandatory identity verification had existed 10 years ago, I never would have met Max Tavita. "Steve, 53" would not have shown up on Bumble last year. Jade from Queensland would not have lost \$840,000 to a romance baiting scam. Countless other examples where the safety and financial security of women is put at risk every day would not be making global headlines.

Australia has already shown leadership in digital regulation with its social media ban for under-16s. Surely we can mandate robust verification for dating apps and reduce the alarming amount of abuse.

This is not radical. It is how every other high-stakes system we trust already works. You cannot board an international flight with an unverified identity. The technology to apply equivalent standards to dating apps already exists. What has been missing is the regulatory will to require it.

Until this changes, it's "buyer beware". Do a reverse image search, read all the safety guides, inform a friend of your plans "just in case", politely request your match to verify themselves, do a video call before you meet, and watch out for every other red flag.

Hamish McLaren will be released on parole on July 10.

His parole conditions include bans from certain suburbs and council areas in NSW, prohibitions on managing money or assets and an order not to contact victims.

There is no condition requiring him to disclose dating profiles he creates or uses.

NSW's new Serious Domestic Abuse Prevention Order scheme can impose this requirement on high-risk offenders, but it was not applied in this case.

There is also no condition banning McLaren from presenting a false name or identity. I was told these conditions were not options for the parole board.

The physical limitations on his movements won't protect women on dating apps. The internet has no exclusion zones. Swipe carefully, ladies. **W**

Tracy Hall is the author of *The Last Victim: The full story behind the relationship made famous by the hit podcast Who the Hell is Hamish*.

## Cryptic crossword

### Across

- 1 A follower escaped in disguise with hotelier's offering (8)
- 5 Breaks up fights (6)
- 9 North Pole fortified by a functioning French general (8)
- 10 Knowing, for instance, class in university (6)
- 12 Right claimed by chaperoned boy in bad shape is impeccable (6,8)
- 14 Machine that processes potatoes well (7)
- 16 Occupants of shop met pupil running back at a fast pace (2-5)
- 18 Guineas kept in bank with approved Asian capital (7)
- 20 Supplement carried by section is a filler (7)
- 21 Broken stein found in dig next to allotment is falling apart (14)
- 25 Nitrogen released by wild flower (6)
- 26 Underwear grabbed by boy or dog (8)
- 27 Boat's guide is not nice about closing of flooded river (6)
- 28 A bound taken during medical should be evaluated (8)

### Down

- 1 Restrict members of club in debt (4)
- 2 Cut in power reversed consumption? (9)
- 3 Viral infection, one contracted in sport (5)
- 4 Start to consider how wine lifted a hearty meal (7)
- 6 Company thought highly of is rendered ineffective (9)

- 7 A difficulty managed by a Caribbean playground (5)
- 8 Penetrate boil not completely hard (3,7)
- 11 Part of Europe - ruralised country (4)
- 13 Country nightclub owned by senior one down under? (5,5)
- 15 Dog goes to the toilet outside royal house finally (9)
- 17 One leader in paper raised postal application for goods (4,5)
- 19 Intense expression of grief (4)
- 20 Raw fear exploited in armed conflict (7)
- 22 Rebuke leader of sect lacking warmth (5)
- 23 Top mark not accepted by master affected conditions (5)
- 24 Dig for diamonds (4)

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COMPILED BY  
DAVID STICKLEY  
SOLUTION  
NEXT WEEK

### Need help?

Get clue help for this crossword and worked solutions at [australiancrosswords.com.au/afr](http://australiancrosswords.com.au/afr)

Solution to last week's crossword

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