

NICHOLAS PARSONS

Brief Biographical Information

Nicholas Parsons began his working life as an engineering apprentice in the tough and harsh world of the Clydeside shipyards, where he worked for five years. He went for a time to Glasgow University but gave up engineering to become an Actor.

His first job was as a Carroll Levis Discovery doing impersonations. He worked for two years in repertory, playing every conceivable role. Later he worked in the West End doing sophisticated cabaret, and then in variety, including six months as resident comedian at the famous Windmill theatre. He did a lot of revues, was in MUCH BINDING IN THE MARSH, the Eric Barker shows, and then met up with Arthur Haynes and the partnership was formed that ran for 10 years and they became the top rated comedy show on ITV in the 60's. They also appeared in an amazing season at the London Palladium called SWING ALONG. When the partnership broke up Nicholas worked for 3 years with Benny Hill in his television series.

In 1968 he was voted Radio Personality of the year for his satirical comedy show LISTEN TO THIS SPACE. At the same time JUST A MINUTE began on Radio 4, and he is still hosting this comedy game show after 47 years. He has appeared in feature roles in many British films, and one American film with Jerry Lewis. He was in one series of Dr Who, THE CURSE OF FENRIC. He has worked consistently in the West End of London in various plays. He starred for over a year in the comedy BOEING-BOEING, UPROAR IN THE HOUSE, SAY WHO YOU ARE, and latterly in a number of musicals CHARLIE GIRL, Stephen Sondheim's INTO THE WOODS, and more recently in two London seasons and a national tour of the cult musical THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW.

He has starred in an American comedy series THE UGLIEST GIRL IN TOWN. He has appeared regularly in pantomime, making a speciality in the role of dame. He probably is best remembered by most people for the highly successful quiz show he hosted for a record 14 years, SALE OF THE CENTURY. He has performed his one man comedy show in many venues in this country, as well as comedy festivals abroad. He has appeared at the Edinburgh Festival on 18 different occasions in 3 different shows. He returns in 2014 to The Pleasance with his comedy chat show THE NICHOLAS PARSONS HAPPY HOUR.

His autobiography THE STRAIGHT MAN – MY LIFE IN COMEDY was published in 1994 and in 2010 he produced a book of memoirs – NICHOLAS PARSONS WITH JUST A TOUCH OF HESITATION, REPETITION AND DEVIATION which has been very well received. He works actively for a number of children’s charities and is ex-President of The Lord’s Taverners. He is an Ambassador for Childline and Silverline and a Barker of the Variety Club. He is a member of the Grand Order of Water Rats. He has been honoured by St Andrews University with a Doctor of Laws in recognition of his work as Rector there for three years. In 2003 he was given an OBE for services to the theatre and broadcasting and in 2013 he was honoured with a CBE for his work for charity.