

Andy Parsons



Is there a finer sight in British comedy than Andy Parsons in full flow? Possessed of dazzling comic powers, the stand-up is one of the most compelling performers around. A man driven by a rare passion for politics, he flies on stage. He is, quite simply, a wonder to behold. Which is why it is such good news that Andy will be coming to a theatre near you very soon. After three previous sell-out nationwide tours, he is hitting the road once more with his brand-new show, “I’ve Got a Shed.”

Chatting to James Rampton on the eve of the tour, Andy proves as funny and feisty as he is on stage. “I love doing live comedy,” beams the stand-up, who has built up a huge following after eleven highly successful series as a regular on BBC2’s very popular topical panel show, *Mock the Week*.

“There are few better feelings than hearing a whole theatre laughing at something you’ve written. Sometimes a room just goes ‘Bang!’ When that happens, you can almost have a sit down and make yourself a cup of tea before coming back thirty seconds later. It’s an extremely enjoyable thing. I’ve never got



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bored of it.” And nor have Andy’s audiences.

The comedian also relishes the fact that anything can happen when you are performing live. “It keeps you on your toes,” observes Andy. “You know that the moment you get complacent, that will be the show that bites you on the backside. You have to be ready to deal with anything. You could trip up on stage or someone in the audience could fall ill.”

Has that ever happened to Andy? “Yes,” replies the comic, who was one of the main writers on the original *Spitting Image*. “I once had someone vomiting in the front row. I was the only person who could see what was going on. I was describing it to the audience who had no idea anyone was being sick. The first laugh came from the other comedians at the back of the room who realised what I had to deal with!”

So what can we expect from “I’ve Got a Shed”? Andy starts by explaining the title. “The initial premise was how more than anything else, I enjoy being in the shed at the end of my garden doing absolutely nothing. I have to fight my own laziness to do this show - or indeed to do anything at all! So to write two hours of new material every couple of years is something of a challenge.”

Andy goes on to reveal that the first half of the show will be more personal than usual. He says that, “I talk about how lazy and careless I am and how I have a disappointing medical history. If you dish it out, can you take it? Now I’m dishing it out to myself.”

Continuing in this self-deprecating vein, Andy says, “I tell a story about how I recently fell off a Routemaster bus. It was

entirely my fault. I was trying to jump off at exactly the right point, and I ended up cartwheeling down the road right in front of a bus queue. They all found it terribly amusing. I wasn’t sure what to do, so I bowed and then went round the corner for a little cry.”

In the second half of “I’ve Got a Shed”, Andy returns to more familiar current-affairs territory. The comedian explains that, “I am a news junkie and politics will always come into it. In the show, I discuss why politics is at such a low ebb at the moment. People are saying we should regulate journalists, but in fact now the public trust journalists more than they trust politicians. That’s a pretty sad state of affairs.”

Andy’s profile was already high, but it is only being increased by the immense popularity of *Mock the Week*. He says that, “It’s very good in terms of profile and enabling me to do bigger tours. It works because people really enjoy watching the bun-fight between seven hungry comedians fighting for space. Also, people get their news from comedy shows these days. So if you can get your news and have a laugh at the same time, that’s not a bad way to spend half an hour.”

“The flipside of people knowing who you are,” Andy adds with a smile, “is that when you fall off the bus front of a queue, the humiliation is that much greater!”

Details of Andy Parsons’ “I’ve Got a Shed” tour are available at www.AndyParsons.co.uk

“What he lacks in hair, Parsons more than makes up for in originality”

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