

Rob Deering

Rob Deering is a cheery fellow with a big happy face. He's an award-winning stand-up comedian and has so far taken five solo shows to the Edinburgh Fringe - in fact that's where I last saw him, hurrying past me with a big grin, carrying his guitar, which these days features prominently in his act. You've probably seen him most recently on the telly; he pops up on the box quite a bit these days and can quite often be found spilling out his memories of popular culture on those ever present list shows. He has performed on *The World Comedy Tour* (Granada), and *The World Stands Up* (Paramount Comedy Channel). He has hosted a couple of talent show spin-offs; presenting *Soapstar Superstar 2007 - Bonus Tracks* (ITV2) and *Strictly Dance Fever 2006* (BBC THREE), he's also done a bit of panel gaming with appearances on *Annually Retentive* (BBC THREE) and *Never Mind The Full Stops* (BBC Four / BBC Two) and is also ever ready to share his opinions of 'the housemates' on *Big Brother's Big Mouth* (Channel 4/E4). He loves his trivia and has done a few quiz shows in his time, most recently he impressed Anne Robinson, winning *The Weakest Link* charity comedy special on BBC One, getting all his questions right in the process. However he may still be best known for drinking his own wee on *99 Things To Do Before You Die* (Five). We caught up with Rob for a bit of a chinwag...

Has music always been a big part of your comedy?

No it hasn't, it's always been a big part of my life. I was always in bands since from being about fourteen, but when I was first a comedian I was completely guitar free for a couple of years, then I started doing one or two jokes, because I could, and they always went well, so I found I was taking my guitar to all my gigs. And then I wrote more and more jokes and then it kind of took over my life like a virus, you know, like The Borg.

What music are you really into?

Erm... I'm very eclectic, but what have I been listening to? I like a bit of the Super Furry Animals... erm... I downloaded a bit of Kylie the other day.

Nowt wrong with a bit of Kylie.

Well you know it was the slightly more obscure, nicely produced stuff, you know, 'Slow' and 'Chocolate'... good songs. Oooh, and an occasional bit of noisy rock, you know, a bit of Zeppelin... I like Pink Floyd, that's sad isn't it... but I don't like Dire Straits at all.

Fair enough. I can understand that. What do you reckon is the album of the year this year?

This year? Ah, yeah, you see... I'm not nearly hip enough to know the answer to that question.

(In that case we'll try to answer it ourselves in a few pages time!)
You're not buying so much of the new stuff.

No. Well I try to; I try to keep up with it. I approve of the Arctic Monkeys and I listen to them when I can, but really that's young people's music. It's so noisy!!

Have you got any strong opinions on the way the music industry and music sales are these days?

Well I think on the one hand it's a good

thing that the record companies are kind of losing their grip, and the internet is really opening things up, but on the other hand there still seems to be a proliferation of people who are pretending to be authentic and sort of non record company produced when they so obviously are. Like all that stuff, last year, or whenever it was, about Sandi Thom. You know, 'oh it's just in her basement'. Yeah it was in her basement with all the record company executives.

And the web technicians.

Exactly. And you know the idea that James Blunt is in some way more honest than *Girls Aloud*, and I don't think he is.

So James Blunt is quite a bit of a target for you?

Yes that's right!

Good for you.

Did you know he wrote a dissertation called "The Commodification of Popular Music"?

No I didn't know that.

Yes he did.

Have you seen his appearance on *Sesame Street*?

No I haven't seen that. Is it on *Youtube*?

Yes it is... I suppose you've heard about it have you?

No I haven't, tell me.

It's him singing 'You're Beautiful'... but instead of singing the words to 'You're Beautiful' he sings about 'My Triangle'... and it's a love song about his favourite triangle.

Oh. I think that's good. I'm sad to say my respect for Blunt has just gone up.

They've even fitted in the word 'hypotenuse' in there which is quite good.

Yeah I don't think I want to watch it actually, because its going to spoil my opinion of him.

Yeah you don't want to start liking him all of a sudden.

No, exactly.

You mention that you've been in quite a few bands during your youth. I'm intrigued by some of the names... do you wanna talk us through a few of them?

Well hit me... Which one's in particular?

Erm... The Jemima Stepdads?

Ah well I can give you the story on that one. My band radically changed line-up at that time. My keyboard player Alex Lestrage became the bass and we sacked the bassist and the drummer and got a drum machine. We borrowed... well a girl I knew called Jemima, we borrowed her stepdad's bass... hence The Jemima Stepdads... and also it sounded kinda indie and cool to me... what an idiot!

I also quite like Benny and the Space Babies.

Yep... that was erm... not my choice. But it was good; it was a special one off band for a friend's birthday. He called himself Benny, and called his band The Space Babies. It's based on the worst name his four year old brother could think of when he was angry. [imitates small angry boy] Oooh, you... you... space babies! But then although Benny left The Space Babies, The Space Babies existed for many years, we used to play weddings and stuff. Covers band.

Wax Lyrical... was that a deep thought or a shallow one?

It was a shallow one... And a passing idiotic one. Within seconds of coming up with that I thought to myself 'oh god that's an irritating name'. It's so wanky. But I, you know, I couldn't shake it off. We had some very, very minor fame... just around school literally... but people would say, 'oh you're in Wax Lyrical aren't you'. And then I tried to change it to Sugar Hiccup, but the rest of the band weren't going for it.

Sugar Hiccup, I like!

Yeah 'Sugar Hiccup' is a Cocteau Twins song. So there we go.

What's your favourite band name ever? Not just your own bands.

Band name! I dunno, I like, erm... I like sort of Bentley Rhythm Ace... and Low Fidelity All Stars... band names like that you know. They just sound good... I don't like... This is one of my old man reactionary things... but I don't like Bat For Lashes. Why aren't they called Bat Your Lashes or Bat Your Eyelashes... but some of the band names now they're a bit... you know... the three, what are you supposed to say... 'chk chk chk', the three exclamation marks... putting in capital letters and all that stuff... band names are in a bit of the doldrums at the moment I think... I'm in The Doldrums at the moment actually... I'm the drummer!

You spent a bit of time writing theme tunes, pop songs and jingles... anything we might have heard of?

Erm... put simply... no. I don't know if you ever watched Vic Reeves Examines which was on, what was at the time UK Play. It wasn't one of Vic Reeves biggest shows, but that was my biggest theme tune, that was my best one... it went der der dum, der der der der der dum de dum dum... and it actually had me on it, singing it like that, there were other instruments but it also had me on going der der dum... It was quite good.

Quite momentous. You're on tour at the moment aren't you?

I am. With my show *Charmageddon*.

What's *Charmageddon* about?

It's just the ultimate Rob Deering stand-up experience really. It's got plenty of stand-up, plenty of self-indulgent guitar work, some gurning, some falling over. There are loose themes. The two key themes of the show are me desperately wanting to be in bands and erm... death. But I don't ram it down your throat... and the death thing... there isn't too much of it, and you don't really notice it with this big face.

And you'll be doing Edinburgh again in August I presume?

That would always be the aim... I mean it's a long time away, who knows what will happen between now and then, but yeah I reckon. I had a couple of quite nice show ideas.

But you're keeping them close to your chest? You're not gonna spill any information?

