

## RICHARD HERRING

Richard Herring has been a mainstay of British comedy writing for years. He talks to **Michael Brown** about persevering with his stand-up career and his forthcoming two-date appearance at this year's Cardiff Comedy Festival.

**A**s one of British comedy's longest-serving writers and most dedicated stand-ups, Richard Herring's CV makes for somewhat exhausting reading. It includes a number of critically acclaimed television works with Stewart Lee as Lee And Herring, contributions to *Alan Partridge* and *Little Britain*, 12 stand-up shows to his name, as well as appearances on *Never Mind The Buzzcocks* and *Have I Got News For You*. It's no wonder he claims to have had "no more than about 12 nights off since January," adding, "it's relentless hard work that gets you these things, but it can be a bit too much."

Fortunately, Cardiff is one of the locales Herring will visit on a lengthy UK tour ahead of his 26-night performance at the Edinburgh Festival. In contrast to the often controversial subject matter of previous shows (*Hitler Moustache* and *Christ On A Bike: The Second Coming* to name but two), Herring's current routine poses the age-old question *What Is Love, Anyway?* "It's a bit of a sweeter show really," he admits, "although I claim at the beginning that I'm attempting to destroy love as it's destroyed me in so many ways. Hopefully people won't be disappointed if it isn't a show all about bumming and desecrating religion, which I don't think it will be."

However, Herring was not always a natural performer on stage, only taking his solo stand-up tours to the club circuit in 2004, 17 years into his career: "The first time I did stand-up I convinced myself that I didn't like it and I didn't like working on my own, so it was quite a big thing for me to overcome. In some ways I regret not persisting with it. But then I think in other ways you come back to something a bit later in your life and you've got a bit more to say and I enjoy it a lot more. If I had to choose one thing out of all the things I do, I think it would be stand-up that I would be content to carry on doing".



Indeed, as a solo comedian, Herring has been a late-comer in a number of ways and perhaps that's why he's making so much of his time now. Despite being consistently busy, he is sure to note that "I'm very fortunate to be in the position where I've got all this work". One example of such work is as a recurring guest on *Have I Got News For You*, something

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which took 20 years to happen and was thus "quite a big deal". However, when it comes to invitations to appear on the likes of *Dancing On Ice*, Herring has no choice but to say no. "I think some of my fans would enjoy the spectacle but I think most of them would think 'it's a bit of a shame that he's done

that!" he laughs. "I see myself as a comedian and if I can do things that help that and are entertaining in themselves, then I'll do them."

With three live stand-up DVDs filmed in Cardiff, largely thanks to independent film production and distribution company Go Faster Stripe ("something Cardiff should be very proud of"). I ask Herring whether he has a special place in his heart reserved for the city. "When we were doing Lee And Herring, Cardiff was one of the first places where fans really got us; I think the kind of outsider feeling we had about our work resonates with Welsh attitudes to the United Kingdom," he jokes. Indeed, if Herring has anything negative to say about Wales, it's traffic-related: "the only bad thing is that I have three speeding fines; speed cameras are too prevalent in South Wales!" Considering that the rest of his year consists of "more of the same", including TV, radio and film writing, not to mention a further gruelling schedule of tour dates, it's no wonder Richard Herring feels the need to speed.

**For your chance to win tickets to see Richard Herring, turn to page 78**

**Richard will be performing his brand new stand-up show *What is Love, Anyway?* at the Cardiff Comedy Festival on Thu 28 and Fri 29 July. Tickets: £11. Info: 029 2087 8444 / [www.stdavidshallcardiff.co.uk](http://www.stdavidshallcardiff.co.uk)**