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## MAN ON A MISSION

**MICHAEL McINTYRE**  
on being hired by Simon  
Cowell to add pizzazz  
to Britain's Got Talent

**Win!**  
A VIP LONDON  
BREAK FOR FOUR

...THIS MESSAGE  
WILL SELF-DESTRUCT  
IN FIVE SECONDS...



# “MICHAEL YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT...”



**Michael McIntyre** exclusively tells **buzz** all about the secret meeting where TV's Mr Big, Simon Cowell, hired him to relaunch Britain's Got Talent and hunt down the next SuBo

PERCHED ON A GIANT imitation Britain's Got Talent buzzer, stand-up star Michael McIntyre is wondering whether **buzz** is trying to stitch him up. He has spent the morning dangling from the ceiling as we challenged him to prove he's up to the daunting task of making and breaking futures as a judge on the ratings-grabbing talent series. With lights prepared and camera primed, we demand: "Now look forlorn, Michael!" "Forlorn? The theme is Mission: Impossible, now I'm on the ground and meant to be looking sad? Because I failed my mission?" he asks, with trademark emphasis on his favourite words. "But I'm really not that scared. If my mission was joining Britain's Got Talent, I feel I succeeded!"

WORDS  
PAUL SIMPER  
PHOTOGRAPHS  
STEVE NEAVES

Viewers will see Michael, 34, in action next month when BGT returns with its latest line-up of brilliant, bad and barmy variety acts. **buzz** has had a peek at the auditions and can confirm that Mr Comedy Roadshow has taken to his new job like a duck to water. But when did he receive his top-secret, self-destructing tape recorder message from the show's creator and head judge Simon Cowell, with the instructions: "Michael, your mission, should you choose to accept it...?"

"I was sitting watching Take That rehearse for the Royal Variety Performance, which I was hosting last December," he says. "I got this phone call and was told: 'Go and see Simon Cowell at his house at one o'clock tomorrow. Here's the address. Don't tell anyone.'"

It would take a brave man to turn down such a request. Was Michael nervous at the prospect? "I actually felt quite relaxed," he grins. "The Royal Variety was the biggest thing I'd done in my career, so I was focused on that – if you have got a lot on your plate, you don't really have time to worry."

"So off I went to Cowell Towers in west London. When I got there, I felt like we were at the Judges' Houses stage of The X Factor. I told Simon how much I love Britain's Got Talent – which is true – and how I wasn't sure if I wanted to do it because I had been intending to take some time off before my next tour."

"But at the end of our chat, Simon stood up and winked at me. He said: 'I'd like you to do it.' I had tried to remain cool throughout the meeting, but at that point I leapt out of my seat with joy. I wanted to run into Dermot O'Leary's arms, but I couldn't because he wasn't there. So I drove home."

Simon will join the panel in the week of the live final shows in late May. But with fellow judge Piers Morgan having quit to host his CNN news show in the States, the BGT producers decided on the bold move of adding Michael and Baywatch actor, rock legend and former America's Got Talent star

David 'The Hoff' Hasselhoff to judge alongside actress Amanda Holden.

As someone who endured his fair share of nerve-shredding gigs before quietly yet quickly taking his place at comedy's top table, Michael is sympathetic to the plight of the hopeful performers. And he has no problem generating huge laughs from the raucous audience in the quieter moments when everyone is waiting for the next act to take to the stage. But what is the most frightening aspect of his new job?

"The big barrier I had to get through was dealing with the first time I said something that the audience didn't agree with," he says. "I've spent my whole career trying to make crowds laugh, so the worst-case scenario for me is that they don't laugh. I had never even considered that there is an even worse-case scenario – which is that they boo!

"On the first occasion I wanted to say no to an act, I ended up bottling it. I said: 'It's a... yes.' Amanda said: 'You totally bottled it.' And I did. I had to get over that because when you're watching at home, it's very different from sitting in the audience where you might be supporting a local person.

"At home, you judge people properly – if they can't sing, they can't sing. So as a judge, you will look foolish if you don't get it right."

### JEERS AND TEARS

With reports saying he even made one young contestant cry, did he toughen up, then?

"The story with me buzzing the young lad in Birmingham [nine-year-old comedian David Knight] has been wildly exaggerated," Michael explains, looking appalled. "He was just quite a sensitive young man. Amanda asked him: 'Who's your favourite comedian?' and he said: 'Harry Hill,' so I immediately buzzed him as a joke. But those buzzers are really loud and he jumped right out of his skin.

"I could see him starting to well up, so I quickly leapt up and said I was only joking. It was just one of those moments. I would have gone up onto the stage but, contrary to the reports, he didn't actually cry. He sorted himself out and then, thankfully, he was good."

Michael is all too aware of just how hard it can be to get your big break in showbiz. While he can now boast of having sell-out tours, record-breaking DVD sales, a prime-time BBC1 series – Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow – and a role on Britain's Got Talent, fame and fortune didn't just fall into his lap.

His late father, Ray Cameron, was a writer for comedian Kenny Everett's TV shows in the 70s and 80s, but Michael didn't even consider stand-up as a profession until he was 21 – sadly only finding success after his comedy-loving father had died of a heart attack, aged 53.



McIntyre pressure: Michael is caught out by our buzz lasers

**WHEN A LAD SAID HE LIKED HARRY HILL, I IMMEDIATELY BUZZED HIM!**

Michael showed early promise in his performances at the Edinburgh Comedy Festival but struggled for the best part of a decade to step up to the next level. He was £30,000 in debt when he joined the likes of Alan Carr and Jonathan Ross on the books of comedy agency Off The Kerb. Coupled with a change in attitude – he started to trust his ability to improvise, then backed it up with more writing – Michael was catapulted into the big time within just a matter of months.

Now, with a massive 70-date arena tour to do in 2012, he's ready to climb even higher. There's just one problem. The problem every

comedian dreads... he's run out of material.

"It took me a long time to work out how to do comedy and make a living from it," Michael reveals. "But it's still hell because I've got no jokes left – everything from the Royal Variety Performance has gone!

"But I'm really excited about the tour. I've dreamed of doing something that would be the very best I can possibly do. That's the plan, anyway. You will of course be buying a ticket for a show that is, as yet, unwritten! If you could please all have some level of faith, that would be much appreciated."

With great success comes great responsibility, however. And Michael is still coming to terms with his new-found role as a sex symbol for



Clockwise from top: Michael with fellow Britain's Got Talent judges Amanda Holden and David Hasselhoff; with wife Kitty; and as a lad with parents Ray and Kati, and little sister Lucy

millions of women. He has been married to wife Kitty since 2004 and has two sons, Lucas, five, and two-year-old Oscar. So he finds it hilarious that women go wobbly at the knees just for the chance to lay their hands on that famous floppy fringe.

"What I didn't realise is that when I talk and become a bit animated, my hair is quite bouncy and I wiggle my head around," Michael says. "It was only when I saw people doing impressions of me that I realised I did it. So the weirdest request I get from girls – especially at book signings – is to touch my hair.

"A few years ago, when I was struggling and couldn't pay the bills, if someone had told me that people would be queuing up to touch my hair, I wouldn't have believed them."

Michael admits that he has never been as captivating to the opposite sex as he is to an audience when he's on stage.

"I can't be cool and mysterious with girls," he says. "I fall completely in love and embarrass myself by being really full-on and frightening people off – like I did with my wife."

### HERE KITTY, KITTY

The courting of Kitty is one of the funniest chapters in Michael's book, *Life & Laughing*.

"After our first date, things seemed to be going my way. But then I started calling her every two minutes and I became a weird, creepy stalker," he reveals. "Once you are a weird, creepy stalker, there's nothing you can do to make it better because every time you try to make it better, you make it worse.

"I don't know why God made it that women

prefer a man who acts like he doesn't care. Women, why do you like the man who doesn't ever get back to you? I was the guy who would always get back to you. I would get back to you almost immediately!"

Thankfully, Kitty saw beyond Michael's hopeless first attempt at a relationship and, two years later, they got together.

"Wooing Kitty was definitely another Mission: Impossible for me," he says. "It was only when I admitted defeat with her and stopped trying so hard that things started to turn around for me."

As Michael strips off his action-man harness and our photoshoot draws to a close, he is still pondering the delicate balancing act involved in getting it right as a judge.

"A couple of times on Britain's Got Talent I would say something, and someone on the show would say: 'That was really funny,' but I knew it wasn't because it didn't get a laugh from the audience. I realised I'd overstepped the mark."

He pauses. Then offers a typically savvy piece of advice to show he's got what it takes to pass judgment on Britain's pool of talent.

"The bottom line is," he says, "you can't argue with the audience's reaction."

Mission accomplished.

**WATCH IT! BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT RETURNS MID-APRIL ON ITV1**

## LIAR, LIAR McINTYRE

There are many outrageous stories in Michael's autobiography, but which are true and which are false? Michael confesses all...

### "MY DAD WAS TV STAR KENNY EVERETT" FALSE

But Kenny would sometimes pick me up from school. Kenny [below, with Michael and mum Kati] was so famous and when people asked if he was my dad I saw a chance to be very popular. It ultimately backfired when my real dad turned up for the fathers' race on sports day.



### "MY STEPDAD WAS DIRTY DANCING'S PATRICK SWAYZE" FALSE

But my stepdad, Steve [Michael's parents separated when he was seven], did once come second in a Patrick Swayze lookalike contest. I tried very hard to find a picture for the book that really captures that look of his. I think you can just about see it here [right].



### "THE OSBOURNES [BELOW] BOUGHT OUR FAMILY'S HOUSE" TRUE

They bought our family home in Hampstead, London. Other people were bidding for it but Mum loved Sharon Osbourne because she thought she was very normal!



### "I MADE UP A RAVE REVIEW FROM THE SUN TO PUT ON MY POSTER" TRUE

My Edinburgh Festival poster [right] had a review on it that read: "The best new comic in the English speaking world." Strictly speaking, it may have been my management that made that quote up. I'm sorry!

