



TV
MAGAZINE

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"HANDS OFF, HE'S my SIMON"

"DAVID, YOU'RE A VERY, VERY, VERY ODD HUMAN BEING"

DAVID & SIMON

ON TV'S BEST BROMANCE

BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT EXCLUSIVE

COVER STORY |

- A FINE - BROMANCE

As *Britain's Got Talent* returns, Simon Cowell, 53, and David Walliams, 41, open up exclusively to *TV Magazine* about their brilliant bond

WORDS PAUL SIMPER

DAVID WALLIAMS TALKS

What's it like doing a photoshoot with Simon Cowell?
Quick. Very quick. He normally stands with his legs apart and his arms folded to suggest the colossal power that he wields – over Louis Walsh! But I think being in my presence makes him distinctly uncomfortable.

So how is your bromance during the new series of *Britain's Got Talent*?
If last year's series was like first love, this is like we're married and a bit sick of each other. It's like we've made love – got it out of our system – and now we're starting to fall out with each other a little bit. But I love being around Simon. He's showing off a little more this year, though – he likes to be mean to me because he knows I enjoy it. Cruelty is what he loves. Amanda [Holden] and Alesha [Dixon] have been round his house, so I said: "Ooh, when can I come over?" and he said: "Never!" [Laughs.] If there's something I really want, he'll deny it to me.

Simon told the *BGT* audience at auditions that you'd signed a new contract which said none of the crowd were allowed to make eye contact with you...
Yeah, he thinks that's hilarious. He did that joke every single session. The audience don't necessarily know that it's a lie. He's there, smiling, and I have to get off on the wrong foot with the crowd. Twice a day for a month!

Is his (lack of) time-keeping maddening?
We know the deal with that. He likes to remain on LA time. He's working all night because he's got a huge career in America. The most maddening thing is when he puts his hand in the air for a contestant to stop when they're in the middle of a song.

Did Simon ever invite you back to his hotel room while you were touring the country during the audition stages?
Well, we had interconnecting rooms. There were two doors that linked my room to his. I opened mine; his always remained locked. But it was nice to know My Simon wasn't far away.

Were there any good exotic acts for Simon to enjoy this year?
There were quite a few pole dancers this time. Simon's done a lot of research in this area of entertainment over the years. He's stayed up all night sometimes studying. [Laughs.] I would say he's actually become a world-class expert on pole dancing.

Is it true that Amanda and Alesha walked out during the Birmingham auditions because they liked a dance act but you wouldn't put them through?
That act was a sort of mixture of mime and dance, and from Holland. The girls were annoyed at me because I'd said yes to some nutty and slightly terrible act I found entertaining, but I hadn't said yes to these guys because I thought we had better dance acts. So they walked out. I hate confrontation so I found it embarrassing. [Laughs.] Simon said to me: "Don't worry, I'll put *The Omen* music on the edit when they walk back out!" I love the girls, though, so I didn't want to fall out with them. They did try to make Simon apologise, but he wouldn't so I had to do it on my own.

Do you think *Britain's Got Talent* will beat *The Voice UK* in the ratings again?
Well, I love Sir Tom Jones, so whenever he's on TV I'll watch. He's one of the nicest stars I've ever met. But I don't really worry about all that. I don't know why schedulers feel the need to put shows up against each other because people would be happy watching both. *Britain's Got Talent* is a strong brand.

Why do you think the chemistry works so well between the *BGT* judges?
It's Simon. People love him – they are fascinated by him. Any talent show is better off when he's in it.

OUR INTERCONNECTING HOTEL ROOMS

HE KEEPS BUYING ME CHOCOLATE

"David's like a naughty little school boy"

"HE'S ALWAYS SHOWING ME THOUSANDS OF PHOTOS OF HIS DOG"

S CAR I E S T BR I D E E V E R

B G T ' S L I K E W E R E M A R R I E D

SIMON COWELL SAYS

How has David been behaving during this year's auditions?
Disgracefully. He is just the most unpredictable person I have ever met. Whatever he feels like doing at that moment, he will do. It's funny, but slightly worrying. He's like a naughty little schoolboy. I've learned that with him. He is a very, very, very odd human being.

David says he's still desperate to be invited to your home...
Yeah, he can wait for a while. [Laughs.] David is actually really annoyed that I haven't invited him and his wife [supermodel Lara Stone, 29] round for dinner yet.

What do you remember about the first time you met David?
He came to my 50th birthday party with James Corden. I hadn't invited him – he just turned up. We became friends after that. With David, it's a bit like it was with Cheryl [Cole] – I just had this feeling that he would be really great fun to work with. But he initially turned down *BGT* as he wasn't interested. I'm glad I eventually persuaded him.

Does David buy you presents?
He hasn't bought me as many as he did last year. He used to buy me a lot of chocolate – I think because he wanted me to be as overweight as he was. Instead he keeps showing me photos of his dog [a Border terrier named Bert]. I must have seen thousands of those.

How did it feel seeing David dressed as a bride for your Comic Relief wedding sketch?
That was one of the scariest things I have ever witnessed. What made it even funnier was that he was so happy in his dress. But that's the other side of David that I like – he is really committed to this charity and he put his heart and soul into that sketch.

Did David really drive Amanda and Alesha so mad they walked out of an audition?
Well, we'd both driven the girls mad. We wouldn't put this stupid act through that they liked so they walked off in a huff. They admitted later that they'd made a mistake, but they acted like three-year-olds. I'd say that this year it's turned into *The Girls v The Guys*.

Do you worry about finding an act the public will love as much as last year's winner Pudsey the dog?
There's always that feeling on the first day of auditions, but then you hope it's going to be something different that wins. [Laughs.] This is not a good year for



Simon and David meet Little Ant & Dec at the Birmingham auditions



Palling around: David, Simon, Amanda and Alesha muck about backstage

animals. We had a raccoon on – it didn't do anything.

Is *BGT* a less stressful show to do than *The X Factor*?
It's definitely more fun – you just don't know what's going to happen by the end. The other day, Amanda and I were

recording some lines for the upcoming Paul Potts movie [Paul won the first series of *BGT* in 2007], which made me think: "God, who would have ever thought that this little guy working for Carphone Warehouse and wearing a terrible suit would be someone we'd now be watching in a movie of his life?"

Susan Boyle and Pudsey are also making movies – will a Simon Cowell talent-show winner ever receive an Oscar?

It's definitely an ambition of mine. I'm not going to lie. I've always had this dream of accepting an Oscar for a movie I've produced or help write, so I hope it happens one day.

You've talked before about ten-year cycles on shows – is this a make-or-break year for *The X Factor* on its tenth anniversary?
I'm confident about *X Factor*. When it works, it's one of the best entertainment shows in the world. The last year I was on [as a judge in 2010], we had One Direction, Cher Lloyd, Rebecca Ferguson and Matt Cardle and I thought it was as good as it gets. Every week was exciting. If you get the right judges, it's a fantastic show. It just lost its way a little bit over the last couple of years. All shows do that. You have to make changes and listen to the public. We'll have the numbers up this year, I guarantee.

How do you feel about going up against *The Voice UK* again?
I like the competition. We've had it for years – it's like a tennis match. It makes us work harder. But it's all done in a friendly spirit – without that kind of competition it would be boring. WATCH IT! *Britain's Got Talent* Saturday 7pm ITV

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David's the most unpredictable person I've ever met