



BRITISH ACADEMY
TELEVISION AWARDS

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**BRUCE FORSYTH TO RECEIVE THE ACADEMY FELLOWSHIP AT
THE BRITISH ACADEMY TELEVISION AWARDS SUPPORTED BY SKY+**

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On Sunday 20 April 2008, the British Academy of Film and Television Arts will present song and dance man Bruce Forsyth with the Academy Fellowship at its annual awards ceremony.

The Fellowship is the highest accolade bestowed by the Academy and is presented in recognition of an outstanding body of work. The Award will be presented by Paul Merton, a huge fan of Bruce. Previously honoured Fellows include Sir David Frost, Albert Finney, David Jason, John Thaw, Dame Judi Dench, Peter Balzalgette and Steven Spielberg

John Willis, TV Committee Chair said: "Bruce Forsyth has been keeping viewers of all ages entertained for decades. He is the ultimate all round entertainer. Just after his 80th birthday is the perfect time for BAFTA to recognize his huge contribution to popular television by awarding Bruce a very well deserved Fellowship."

The legendary Bruce Forsyth began his remarkable career at the age of 14 performing his own song and dance routine. Having spotted him in 1958, agent Billy Marsh put Bruce's name forward to comper the nation's most popular TV programme, **Sunday Night at the London Palladium**. Bruce became an overnight success and the first of his many catch phrases - "*I'm in Charge*" - was on the lips of the entire nation.

Bruce then starred at the London Palladium and made the first of many appearances within the **Royal Variety Show**. In 1973, firmly established as one of Britain's top entertainers, Bruce headed **The London Palladium Show** whilst also hosting the third series of the **Generation Game** on BBC One. Attracting more than 20 million viewers, the **Generation Game** heralded Bruce as, "the most important man in British Television" and also associated him with the recreation of Rodin's "Thinker" pose with which viewers still associate him today.

The Variety Club of Great Britain voted Bruce Forsyth Show *Business Personality of the Year* and readers of the TV Times voted him *Favourite TV Personality*, an accolade which he received twice more in future years. He was also voted *TV Personality of the Year*.

During this period Bruce also developed and performed his **One Man Show** which enjoyed huge success at the London Palladium and later abroad in New Zealand, Australia, New York and Los Angeles. Testament to his popularity with the British public, Bruce has personally compered and appeared in no less than 12 Royal Variety Shows, and also appeared on stage as a double act with HRH Prince Charles, The Prince of Wales.

Ever the consummate professional, Bruce was then invited to host an ambitious two-hour compendium of entertainment in the form of **Bruce Forsyth's Big Night** which by the end of its run attracted over 14 million viewers.

Voted as *TV Times Favourite Gameshow Host* in 1984 Bruce continued to dominate the Saturday night schedule. In 1980 he recorded a hugely successful series of 28 episodes for **Play Your Cards Right** and was also the first Englishman to host a gameshow in America, recording **Hot Streak** for ABC. It's no surprise that the first series of **You Bet!** was an immediate ratings-winner.

In 1992 Bruce celebrated **50 Years in Show business** and to mark this occasion a personal tribute dinner was televised by the BBC. In 1994 Bruce made a welcome return to LWT to bring back **Play Your Cards Right** as well as one of ITV's flagship shows **The Price is Right**, both commanding massive audience viewing figures.

In recent years Bruce has combined his love of dance and effortless ability to entertain, with the ongoing top-rated flagship series **Strictly Come Dancing** which has included four Christmas Specials with co-presenter Tess Daly.

Bruce was awarded an OBE for his outstanding work in the world of entertainment, and later a CBE by HM the Queen. It's no surprise that with his colourful showbiz career Bruce wrote an autobiography which was a bestseller and a televised BAFTA tribute to him was aired on BBC One in 2004. Most recently, to mark his 80th birthday, the BBC produced a whole celebratory programme in his honour. Bruce's inaugural star in the **Avenue of Stars** only underlines the outstanding and ongoing achievements of a much loved national icon.

The British Academy Television Awards sponsored by Sky+ will be broadcast on BBC One at 8pm this Sunday.

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About BAFTA: The British Academy of Film and television Arts supports, develops and promotes the art forms of the moving image by identifying and rewarding excellence, inspiring practitioners and benefiting the public.