



Biography - SHAZIA MIRZA

"Her laconic one-liners represent something quite unique in modern comedy." *The Guardian*

Revered, applauded, loved and reviled Shazia Mirza is an award-winning comedian and columnist, as much recognised for her literary prowess as she is for her unique comedic talents.

A trained biochemist, Shazia was born and educated in Birmingham – the daughter of first-generation Pakistani immigrants. Raised in a strict Muslim family environment, Shazia reluctantly pursued a career as a science teacher whilst secretly honing her writing, acting & comedy skills part-time at drama school and with late-night gigs across the country. Oblivious to Shazia's determined but clandestine commitment to her art, it took an appearance on *Have I Got News For You* for friends and family to realise the extent of Shazia's ambitions. "Although it remained the 'c' word in the family house for years", she remarks.

Fusing contemporary issues with her own personal experiences, Shazia pressed a lot of buttons with her taboo-breaking, deadpan, confident style. She grabbed national attention in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks by performing her act in recognisable hijab dress and beginning with the remark, "My name is Shazia Mirza. At least, that's what it says on my pilot's licence." This was the year she won her first award - at the London Comedy Festival.

In 2003, she was listed in *The Observer* as one of the 50 funniest acts in British comedy and won the GG2 Young Achiever of the Year Award. She also trot the boards in *The Vagina Monologues* at The Royal Albert Hall.

TV work soon followed both in the UK and in the States and in 2007, she presented a documentary on BBC 3 called *F*** Off, I'm a Hairy Woman* – for which she spent seven months in the service of hirsutism. She was also a semi-finalist on NBC's *Last Comic Standing* (2008) and other TV credits include: *Muslim Driving School* (Voiceover BBC2 2010), *Beautiful People* (BBC2 2009) *Richard and Judy* (Channel 4 roving reporter 2007) *28 Acts in 28 Minutes* (BBC3 2005) *The World Stands Up* (Paramount Comedy 2004) and *60 Minutes* (CBS 2004)

Shazia has performed her stand-up shows across the world – from the Edinburgh Fringe to Texas, USA to Dubai and Kosovo. She has particularly travelled extensively across Europe, where she is in great demand. Her hit shows have included *The Last Temptation of Shazia Mirza* and *Portrait Of Shazia Mirza*. Radio appearances include a regular slot on BBC Radio Scotland and *The Now Show* on BBC Radio 4.

As a writer Shazia formerly penned a fortnightly column for *The New Statesman* for which she won 'Columnist of the Year 2008' at the prestigious PPA Awards. She has written for the *Guardian* for many years and currently has a new weekly column in their Weekend magazine entitled 'Dairy of a Disappointing Daughter'. She also writes for *Virgin's Hotline Magazine*.

In March 2009, she was listed on the inaugural Muslim Women's Power List as one of the 20 most successful Muslim women in the UK.

