

Amnesty International UK PRESS RELEASE

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LINE UP CONFIRMED FOR THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S BALL

Line up includes: Eddie Izzard, Russell Brand, The Mighty Boosh, Jennifer Saunders, Jon Culshaw, Omid Djalili, Meera Syal and the legendary Chevy Chase.

[Video footage, photographs and new 'Secret Policeman' logo available]

Amnesty International UK today announced the star studded line up for the return of a legend, the best-loved name in comedy, **The Secret Policeman's Ball**. Tickets will go on sale on Saturday 16th September to see some of the most revered names in the comedy from both the UK and the US take the stage at the Royal Albert Hall.

The Ball will be held on Saturday 14 October 2006, and will be broadcast on Channel 4 television soon after.

Tickets are available via Royal Albert Hall box office (0207 589 8212 and www.royalalberthall.com) and www.ticketzone.co.uk.

Re-invented and re-booted for the twenty-first century, The Secret Policeman's Ball - which launches Amnesty International's 'Protect The Human Week' - will feature Al Murray, Chevy Chase, Eddie Izzard, Russell Brand, Jennifer Saunders, Jimmy Fallon, The Mighty Boosh, Jon Culshaw, Meera Syal, Omid Djalili, Jessica Stevenson, Ronni Ancona, Seth Green, Richard E Grant, Andrew Maxwell, The Gorillaz characters, and The Magic Numbers in a night of never-before-seen collaborations.

As well as the traditional mix of stand-up and sketch comedy, Amnesty International will be adding many new ingredients, including animations, featuring Patrick Stewart, Joanna Lumley, Jimmy Carr, Tara Fitzgerald, Jo Brand and Brian Cox.

Public support for Amnesty increased by 700% after the first three shows, the profile of human rights went through the roof, and once again The Secret Policeman's Ball has been called on to take its place in the fight for global justice.

Kate Allen, UK Director of Amnesty international, said: "We're bringing back The Ball because it's never been more important to stand up for human rights. Using the international language of comedy, we intend to bring people together to celebrate and stand up for humanity."

Jimmy Carr said, "I support Amnesty International because who knows when I'll be chained to a radiator and beaten with a rubber truncheon. I think it's Thursday, 4.30, Soho but I'll have to check my diary."

Al Murray said, "It is a fantastic honour to be asked to play the Secret Policeman's Ball, though you have to wonder why if they're secret policemen they want all this publicity"

Thirty years ago in 1976, Amnesty International, with a little help from John Cleese and his friends, began producing world-changing comedy shows that promoted human rights. The series, collectively known as The Secret Policeman's Balls, consisted of seven shows and lasted until 1991, taking the UK public by storm.

The original shows contained many seminal showbiz moments: some of Monty Python's finest live performances, John Cleese and Peter Cook's first on-stage collaboration, Terry Jones in Beyond The Fringe sketches, Sting's first solo performance, and Rowan Atkinson's first try-out with a voice now globally recognised as that of Mr Bean.

With music from Bob Geldof, Lou Reed, Kate Bush, Duran Duran (and with Bono in the audience), The Ball was the first event of its kind - demonstrating the power of artists and entertainment to inspire action, paving the way for Live Aid and Comic Relief.

Terry Gilliam, Monty Python star and original performer said:

"Now, as in the days of the early Secret Policeman's Balls, governments are really keen on locking up people they don't like. We have to have eyes and ears out all the time and voices that will shout out and say this is wrong, this is terrible.

Artists require freedom to do what they do, freedom to speak out and freedom to propose radical ideas. Amnesty defends that freedom. In return artists can give Amnesty's voice a platform making it louder, more powerful. Eventually the bad guys have to listen."

Amnesty International, which now has more than 260,000 members and supporters in the UK and nearly two million worldwide, campaigns to abolish the death penalty and torture, for the release of all prisoners of conscience, to control the arms trade and to stop violence against women.

ENDS

Note to editors:

A separate briefing on former Ball events - including a list of performers - is available on request.

For more information: www.secretpoliceman.com

Media contacts:

Freud Communications:

Danielle Robinson: 020 7291 6316, danielle.robinson@freud.com; Nik Selman 020 7291 6331

Amnesty International UK Media Unit:

Mike Blakemore: 020 7033 1546, mike.blakemore@amnesty.org.uk

Steve Ballinger: 020 7033 1548, steve.ballinger@amnesty.org.uk

Out of hours: 07721 398984