



## Paul Merton

Comedian, Writer & Television Personality



### CSA CELEBRITY SPEAKERS

Paul Merton is a British actor, deadpan comedian and writer, who is best known as a panellist on Have I Got News For You. Born Paul Martin in the Parsons Green area of London, he gained his earliest professional credits under that name. On joining Equity he found that the name Paul Martin was already taken, so he renamed himself after Merton, the district of London where he grew up. His breakthrough as a television performer came on the improvised comedy show Whose Line Is It Anyway from 1988 onwards. Have I Got News for You started in 1990 and two series of his own sketch show Paul Merton - The Series followed soon after. Since 1999 he has been the host of Room 101, a chat show in which guests are offered the chance to discuss their pet hates and consign them to the oblivion of Room 101. He has been a member of the London improve group The Comedy Store Players since 1985 and still regularly performs with them. Despite a bemused reception, two series of Paul Merton - The Series offered an inspired mixture of surreal stories and ingenious sight gags. Very much in the spirit of Spike Milligan's Q, it was inventive without resorting to coarse language and violent slapstick. After seven nominations for a BAFTA award for Best Entertainment Performance, Paul Merton finally won the award in April 2003.