



AUF WIEDERSEHEN MERKEL, HALLO SPITTING IMAGE

FOLLOWING 200 MILLION GLOBAL VIEWS ONLINE THE BRITBOX UK HIT, SPITTING IMAGE, BEGINS INTERNATIONAL BESPOKE SHOW ROLL OUT WITH SKY GERMANY

London – 24 May 2021 – It was announced today that, following the successful return of the show to the UK, Sky Germany will bring a bespoke *Spitting Image* show to German audiences, with puppets of prominent national figures already in development. In line with the roll out of the second series to BritBox UK and BritBox Australia, the innovative format and tape deal will see an approx. 50/50 mix of globally resonating content from the English language version (redubbed by Germany's leading voice artists), and new topical local sketches (written by German comedy writers) filmed in the UK-based *Spitting Image* studio close to transmission to ensure maximum topicality.

With well-known national figures like Jürgen Klopp and Angela Merkel already featuring heavily in season one, as you'd expect with the upcoming German federal elections puppets including Armin Laschet, Markus Söder, Austria's Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, are in production as well as domestic TV stars including Barbara Schöneberger and athletes including Thomas Müller. These are just some of new German faces to fall under the gaze of the legendary Spitting Image Workshop.

With widespread critical and social media acclaim, *Spitting Image* has delivered record subscribers for BritBox UK, the BBC and ITV created streaming platform, and a 4.4 million audience for ITV with a one-off US Election Special, the highest Saturday night ratings for at that time in four years (one of ITV's biggest Saturday night ABC1 audiences of 2020). Across official social media channels, *Spitting Image* content has been hugely popular with over 200 million views globally and three No. 1 trending videos on YouTube.

With the world getting smaller and more turbulent, last year celebrated *Spitting Image* co-creator Roger Law returned to head up the show's creative team, while multi-award-winner Jeff Westbrook (*The Simpsons*, *Futurama*) joined as Showrunner, leading the international writing team on the iconic British satirical take on global events.

Roger Law said: "*Unlike Boris Johnson, I'm delighted that Spitting Image is working in collaboration with Sky Deutschland. The puppets are terribly excited and very busy perfecting their German. The show probably won't be about Brexit, the World Cup or motorways, but who knows... You can never be too sure about Spitting Image!*"

Christian Asanger, Vice President Entertainment at Sky Deutschland: "*Spitting Image is cult show! With the world's first local version of this successful British format, we are adding another innovative Sky Original to our comedy portfolio. Whether a scientist, sportsman or TV star - German celebrities will soon be shivering in front of Spitting Image and, in keeping with the Bundestag elections in September, German political figures will also get their money's worth.*"

Produced by Avalon (*Taskmaster*, *The Russell Howard Hour*, *Catastrophe*, *Breeders*, *Everything's Gonna Be Okay*, *Last Week Tonight With John Oliver*), development of puppets for series two is already underway with Joe Biden, Boris Johnson, Prince Andrew, Vladimir Putin, Harry & Meghan, Beyoncé, Angela Merkel, Dwayne Johnson, Ed Sheeran, Jürgen Klopp, Elon Musk, Adele, Covid-19, James Corden, Emmanuel Macron, Mark Zuckerberg, Donald Trump, and Dominic Cummings just some of the global figures that fell under the show's legendary gaze for the debut hit series. A next generation of satirical writers and voice artists were assembled to drive a new wave of 'public service satire'. In keeping with the 80s and 90s, scripts were written and new puppets made close to delivery to ensure each week's episode was as topical as possible.

Internationally, the debut of the first series drew the second-best channel audience figure in Finland for its time slot and was hailed by the leading Finnish newspaper as being, *"As vicious and risqué as before"* and successfully launched in Belgium with a 22% of total TV audience share, as well as seeing millions of views in the USA via YouTube.

The bespoke German elements will be produced by Avalon and Redseven Entertainment, producer Georg Kappenstein, executive producer Sebastian Benthues, head writer Elmar Freels. Executive Producers for Avalon are Jeff Westbrook, Joanna Beresford, Jon Thoday, Richard Allen-Turner and Roger Law. BritBox Commissioning Executive is Nana Hughes.

As part of the new deal series one is being revoiced in German by the country's leading voice artists.

Spitting Image will return this autumn.

What the press said about series 1...

"lost none of its savagery or willingness to shock." ★★★★★

Mark Lawson, The Guardian

"Throughout, the puppets and the impressions are pleasures in themselves... Spitting Image still has some fire lurking in its belly." ★★★★★

Dominic Maxwell, The Times

"so far its resurrection is pleasingly familiar to those who remember the original... they haven't, despite early reports, held back on the viciousness... in general, a B-plus"

Euan Ferguson, The Observer

"TV GOLD: The Boris sat-nav sketch and Keir Starmer's Shadow Cabinet/donkey sanctuary eeh-awing down the phone to him"

"TV GOLD: The Keir Starmer "Foxman" sketch and Meghan Markle's 'exfoliating butt chutney'"

Ally Ross, The Sun

"with its Trumpian body part, hideously tweeting, one of the (horribly, brilliantly) unforgettable moments of this year's TV."

David Butcher, The Radio Times

"a hit show... Spitting Image has provided some rare laughs... we need those puppets back soon."

Ian Burrell, The i

"some sublime moments... You can happily enjoy all that creativity while you wait for the next joke to pull in." ★★★★★

Sean O'Grady, The Independent

"congratulations on Spitting Image, we've just been watching it this morning, we could barely do the first half hour of the show, I mean seriously... thanks goodness it's back... it's as fresh as a daisy this one ... it's hilarious"

Chris Evans, Virgin Radio

"the much-missed satirical puppet show made a triumphant return" ★★★★★

Mark Wareham, The Mail on Sunday

★★★★★

Mike Mulvihill, The Daily Mail

★★★★★

Mike Ward, Daily Star

★★★★★

Simone Andrews, The Daily Mail

★★★★★

Daily Star on Sunday

"the superb new Spitting Image series on BritBox... the sharpest, funniest and most ferocious take on events you'll see all week."

Eleanor Relf, The Sun

"The first series of BritBox's Spitting Image revival went out with a bang... triumphant return as one of BritBox's first original titles, with a whole host of new distorted puppets... the platform's subscribers will undoubtedly miss the show's weekly political parodies."

Lauren Morris, Radio Times

"Trump's puppet is spot-on, looking like a swollen tuna in a wig."

James Jackson, The Times

"don't expect it to be kind"

Ben Dowell, The Times

"Better latex than never"

The Guardian

"bitingly funny puppet sketch show...Laughs when we need them most"

Sunday Mirror

"it can go to places other comedies can't"

Jack Seale, Radio Times

"... it's finally here. One of the most influential British satirical shows of all time"

Henry Mance, Financial Times

"it's very very funny"

Gaby Roslin, BBC Radio London

"hit revival"

Steve Wright, BBC Radio 2

"I couldn't agree more with the success it's having over here"

Richard Arnold, ITV Good Morning Britain

"I watched some of this last night, with some trepidation having loved it in my youth, but I actually really enjoyed it and laughed more than I thought I would... I very much enjoyed the New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Arden as the practically perfect Mary Poppins"

Rachel Burden, BBC Radio 4

"it certainly did not disappoint... it was cracking, I loved it, I highly recommend people watching it... absolutely brilliant"

Ayesha Hazarika, Times Radio

"satirical sidesplitter... We need them kept on their toes now more than ever."

Andy Halls, The Sun

"it's strangely comforting that Spitting Image can return and still (as the Twitter furore and the USA's hesitation to even screen it prove) have that power to wind folk right up! Welcome back, guys!"

★★★★

Jack Bottomley, Starburst Magazine

"has certainly got plenty of people laughing"

Total TV Guide

"it's more vicious than ever"

Ralph Jones, NME

"The first thing to say about the revived Spitting Image is that it works. This will come as a relief to those, including your reviewer, for whom the original show was a vital part of the 1980s and 90s"

Robert Hutton, The Critic

"I did watch the relaunched Spitting Image (BritBox), and some of it was quite funny. The satire of Dominic Cummings and Boris Johnson had a certain truth about it."

David Mellor (quoted in The Times)

"The show has been a huge hit with viewers due to its hilarious portrayal of likes of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Michael Gove, Dominic Raab and Priti Patel."

Lucy Murgatroyd, The Sun

"has truly found its moment by accurately caricaturing the physiognomical state of Donald Trump (candyflossed barnet, tan not so much Palm Beach as Nagasaki)... Long may its comedic genius be with us."

Gavin Docherty, Daily Express

"ingenuity, along with the signature grotesque caricatures its talented puppetry department keep producing."

Ivan Radford, VODzilla

"its targets are once again gleaned from far and wide across the social spectrum... having merciless fun poked straight into them... the buffoonery and entitlement of Trump and Johnson ceaselessly demolished."

Brian Donaldson, The List

"The puppets are as brilliant as always"

Gerard Gilbert, The i

"I really enjoyed it again this time around... I love the look of the puppets, I like the fact that there's still a lot of savagery there, they're pretty merciless"

Fiona Shepherd, The Scotsman (on BBC Radio Scotland)

"some of it was very funny"

Bruce Dessau, Beyond The Joke/Evening Standard

"To these eyes, it's been a welcome revival: toothier than most TV comedy – bolstered by A-list writers and voice artists – with outstanding puppetcraft to marvel at"

Mike McCahill, Reader's Digest

On Twitter...

"Just watched Spitting Image. Was so worried I'd be disappointed or it'd be lame. Thank God, it's anything but. It's really funny."

Lewis Goodall

(Policy Editor at BBC Newsnight)

"Loving Spitting Image so far."

Tim Stanley

(Historian, Columnist & Leader Writer at The Daily Telegraph)

"I thought the best sketch of the last Spitting Image was the Nancy Pelosi one - nice example of how satire doesn't have to lean left"

Henry Mance

(The Financial Times)

"The new Spitting Image series is funny because it follows the first rule of political satire: Be unspeakably rude to everyone."

Keith Humphreys

(Journalist at Washington Post/Professor at Stanford University)

"The new Spitting Image puppet of Dominic 'I was only testing my eyesight' Cummings is sublime."

Piers Morgan

"The first time I can recall a Spitting Image puppet [shares Piers Morgan puppet] to be actually quite flattering."

Gary Lineker

"Politicians and celebrities will be cringing behind the sofa. Spitting Image is back and as unforgiving as ever."

Kay Burley

"Xi Jinping, TikTok and the Jinping Shuffle c/o Spitting Image. #China"

Stephen McDonnell

(BBC China Correspondent)

"The new Spitting Image on BritBox had a properly funny piss-take of Klopp last weekend BTW. Taking the piss out of his humility and self-deprecation. With a really good impression. Proper satire. He would love it... This was the first Spitting Image (new era) take on Klopp. Which was ... spot on... Trump absolutely grotesque: which is accurate. The arsehole tweeting is just horrible, and funny. Priti Patel and Gove too. Boris J an idiot; Cummings a wacko alien. Biden a lame duck. Starmer struggling for relevance. All-round satire"

Nick Harris

(The Mail on Sunday/SportingIntelligence.com)

"Unfortunately, it'll be hard for Americans to watch 'Spitting Image'. The television network NBC has backed out of broadcasting the series at the last moment, apparently for fear of offending people. Which is of course the point of the show."

John Simpson

(BBC News)

"Spitting Image should just set this [the real Trump speaking around US Election] to the music from Chariots of Fire and run it in full"

Tim Shipman

(The Sunday Times)

"am not going to miss the Spitting Image guest for anything!"

Tim Levell

(Programme Director at Times Radio)

"The Spitting Image take on Jacinda Ardern's coronavirus brutality cloaked in Kiwi kindness is brilliant. And very very funny."

Dan Wootton

(TalkRadio/The Sun)

"Michael Gove Visits Mistress Priti Patel's Boudoir. WATCH & GIGGLE: <https://youtu.be/qfddokPlu8Q> Via Spitting Image"

Peter Tatchell

(Human Rights Campaigner/Director of The Peter Tatchell Foundation)

"Just watched first ep of Spitting Image - The Guardian gives it 4 stars I give it 5 !! Absolutely hilarious and of course hugely offensive"

Derren Litten

(Creator of Benidorm)

"I recommend you watch Spitting Image"

Mike Gapes

(Former Member of UK Parliament)

"In case you've not realised yet, the new Spitting Image is brilliant. Annoying all the right people. It lampoons Trump and Pence and Boris sure, that's easy. But also Ardern, Starmer and Harris. That's less easy, and they're even funnier."

Rupert Beale

(Group Leader, Cell Biology of Infection at The Francis Crick Institute)

"very good gags ... Matt Hancock's puppet might replace Matt Hancock"

Toby Earle

(TV Journalist)

"wickedly offensive"

Darren Scott

(SFX Magazine)

"Back to its absurd, irreverent and deliciously crude best. So pleased to have it back."

Adam Fowler

(TV Reporter)

"Spitting Image is every bit as brilliant as I hoped it would be"

Neil Wilkes

(Co-Founder of Digital Spy/Editor of Sports Mole)

"Spitting Image, watched first episode last night. Trump, Boris and Cummings are in a class of their own. Absolutely brilliant."

Graeme Bandeira

(Newspaper Cartoonist)

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Notes to editors

About Sky Ticket:

The Sky Ticket streaming service is available anytime, anywhere and without a long contract. All customers need for Sky Ticket is an Internet-enabled device or the Sky Ticket TV Stick with access to 36 additional apps. A receiver is not necessary. Whether customers want to watch award-winning series, blockbuster movies, live sports or just an extra TV programme for the kids, Sky Ticket offers the right packages for entertainment, cinema and sports at any time.

Speaking of sport: With Sky Ticket, customers experience the best live sport, including top matches from the UEFA Champions League, the Bundesliga, the 2nd Bundesliga, the DFB Cup, all Formula 1 races, the LIQUY MOLY Handball Bundesliga, as well as the best from tennis and golf.

Film and series fans can stream more than 1,000 films, blockbuster series from HBO, Fox and TNT as well as award-winning Sky Originals with Sky Ticket at any time without a contract.

For more information, visit <https://skyticket.sky.de/>

About Sky Deutschland:

Sky Deutschland is one of the leading entertainment companies in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, offering a world class range of content from the best live sports, exclusive series and the latest movies to varied children's programs, exciting documentaries and entertaining shows – many of them Sky Originals. In addition to the free-to-air channel Sky Sport News, viewers can watch programs at home and on the go via Sky Q and Sky Ticket. Sky Q aggregates everything conveniently in one place: Sky and free-to-air channels, thousands of films and series on demand, and a wide range of apps. With Sky Ticket, customers can stream series, movies and live sports flexibly where they want and when they want, on a monthly cancellation basis. Sky Deutschland, headquartered in Unterföhring near Munich, is part of the Comcast Group and belongs to Europe's leading media and entertainment company Sky.

About Avalon:

Avalon is a multi-award-winning talent management, television production and live promotion group with offices in London, Los Angeles and New York.

Avalon, Artist Rights Group (ARG) and The Agency represent a prolific roster of artists including comedians, actors, presenters, writers and directors. Avalon's numerous ground-breaking returning television shows currently in production include: *Not Going Out* (BBC), the UK's longest running sitcom on air; *Taskmaster* (Channel 4), the BAFTA-winning hit entertainment format showing in 100 countries; multi Emmy-winner, *Last Week Tonight* with John Oliver (HBO); *The Russell Howard Hour* (Sky), the network's most successful entertainment show launch since 2010; *Starstruck*, a new sitcom from the 2018 Edinburgh Comedy Award winner Rose Matafeo (HBO Max/BBC); *Everything's Gonna Be Okay*, from creator Josh Thomas (Freeform); *Breeders*, a sitcom starring Martin Freeman and Daisy Haggard (FX/Sky); a new series of the iconic British satirical puppet show, *Spitting Image* (BritBox UK); and multiple comedy specials for Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max and Netflix.

Other landmark Avalon shows include BAFTA winning and multi Emmy nominated *Catastrophe* (Amazon Prime Video/Channel 4), *Fantasy Football League* (BBC/ITV), multi BAFTA-winning *TV Burp* (ITV), and *Workaholics* (Comedy Central USA). Avalon also distributes its catalogue of programmes to over 150 countries worldwide. Avalon has produced many globally successful podcasts and is at the top of the UK iTunes chart with the multi-award-winning *Shagged. Married. Annoyed* by Chris and Rosie Ramsey.

As a leading promoter of live comedy, Avalon produced *Newman and Baddiel: Live at Wembley*, the UK's first arena comedy show; *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, the first West End show to win all four UK 'Best New Musical' awards; and has continued to produce and promote live shows globally, as well as promoting more winners and nominees of the prestigious Edinburgh Comedy Award than any other company.

For Avalon news visit: www.avalonuk.com/press or follow [@avalonent](https://twitter.com/avalonent)