

## Sir Michael Parkinson Interview

On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July, Sir Michael Parkinson will be hosting Henley Festival's main stage concert. He kindly agreed to give us an interview about his appearance at the Festival.

*"Sir Michael, you're coming to the Henley Festival to host the Friday night main stage concert, 'Pure Gold from the Silver Screen'. Over your career you seem to have had quite a connection with music from the movies. Is it a particular favourite?"*

"Well, yes, it's always played a big part in my life. You see, I come from the film generation, not the television generation. Growing up I used to go to the cinema about 4 times a week. I love the Great American Songbook (the mix of Broadway and Hollywood musical work by such composers as Cole Porter, Johnny Mercer, Duke Ellington, Hoagy Carmichael, Jerome Kern, etc). Then in the '60s and '70s I hosted an annual concert of film music at the Royal Festival Hall, where composers like John Barry would come to conduct the London Symphony Orchestra. And only a year ago, I hosted 10 concerts of film music at the Sydney Opera House."

*"John Barrowman is headlining 'Pure Gold from the Silver Screen'. Is he someone you've interviewed?"*

"Unfortunately no – nothing personal, but as he was coming on the scene my TV show and my radio show were just finishing. I've met him on a couple of occasions and will be pleased to see him again."

Born the son of a miner in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, Sir Michael did his national service as the British Army's youngest captain before starting his career in the media as a journalist for local Yorkshire newspapers and for the Manchester Guardian and Daily Express. From there it was a short step into television and the rest, as they say, is history. For the last 40 years he has lived locally in Bray, just outside Maidenhead. Local friends include Michel Roux Snr, whose brother Albert and Albert's son (also Michel) will be overseeing the Festival's Riverside Restaurant this July. We asked Sir Michael about this connection.

"Yes," he said, "Michel is a friend. He took over my local pub. I've forgiven him, but only just! I used to row down there on a Sunday for lunch, then row back rather erratically, as you could in those days. Seriously though, it was the Roux brothers who really drove the radical change in our attitude towards food."

*" We understand you will be talking to someone else at the Festival that you may not realise you have met before. Cantabile – the London Quartet will be one of the groups of musicians you will be hosting on 10<sup>th</sup> July. Were you aware that in 1985 they performed on your show, with founder member (and now Henley Festival's Artistic Director) Stewart Collins as one of the 4 singers?"*

"No, I didn't. Splendid. I love Cantabile, their work. Henley is such a beautiful place. Henley and Marlow are 2 of my favourite towns, not spoiled by speculation. I shall be at the Festival on the day, have dinner with a friend at the Festival beforehand – and maybe more drinking and eating again afterwards."

We all look forward to seeing Sir Michael there.

Sir Michael Parkinson is hosting Henley Festival's Floating Stage concert, 'Pure Gold from the Silver Screen' on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009. Other stars performing include John Barrowman, Kerry Ellis and Cantabile – the London Quartet, together with the BBC Concert Orchestra. The concert will be recorded by Radio 2 for 'Friday Night is Music Night'. For further details and to book tickets, please go to the website: [www.henley-festival.co.uk](http://www.henley-festival.co.uk) or ring the box office on 01491 843404.