

Durham University Performing Arts is delighted to present Nick Mohammed for the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to UK arts and culture. Nick Mohammed is a performer, comedian, writer, musician, presenter, host, and proud alumnus of Durham University. Across stage, screen, and radio, he has consistently demonstrated a rare ability to blend humour with humanity, creating characters that are both memorable and meaningful.

Nick's achievements are too broad to list in full, but his recent work spans an impressive range of media. From his voice roles in *Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget* and *Christopher Robin*, to television work including *Intelligence* and his acclaimed performance in *Ted Lasso*, he has captivated audiences worldwide. His film appearances include *Bridget Jones's Baby*, alongside the continued development of his much-loved creation, Mr Swallow.

His creative excellence with broad popular appeal extends beyond performance. He has hosted the Olivier Awards, presented for the BBC Proms, and created podcasts for BBC Radio 3—demonstrating not only his versatility, but his commitment to enriching the cultural landscape. Recent appearances on *Taskmaster* and *Celebrity Traitors* have further cemented his status as a household name, showcasing his quick wit, creativity, and unmistakable charm.

When Nick arrived in Durham, he was already an accomplished magician, having honed his craft while growing up in Leeds. As an undergraduate studying Geophysics and an enthusiastic member of St Aidan's College, he immersed himself fully in student life, embracing a wide range of creative opportunities.

He was deeply involved in music, performing with the Durham University Orchestral Society and serving as conductor of the Hill Orchestra. His musical talent reached a global audience through *Ted Lasso*, where his violin performance left many wondering if it was truly him playing—it was, accompanied on piano by his wife and fellow Durham alumna, Becka. Nick was equally active in Durham Student Theatre, appearing in productions at the Sir Thomas Allen Assembly Rooms Theatre and touring Shakespeare with Castle Theatre Company. His contemporaries remember him as a gifted magician, regularly performing at college balls alongside his studies and other activities.

Comedy, notably, is absent from his list of student credits. He famously auditioned twice for the Durham Revue and was unsuccessful on both occasions—a rejection that, in hindsight, does not seem to have hindered his career. It is this versatility that makes Nick Mohammed an exemplar Durham graduate. He embodies the values of student enrichment: creativity, curiosity, resilience, and collaboration.

It is a great pleasure to celebrate a performer whose creativity, intelligence, and generosity of spirit have made a remarkable contribution to contemporary arts and culture. Beyond his talent, it is his dedication, humility, and willingness to explore the complexities of the human experience that truly distinguish him. He reminds us that laughter can coexist with vulnerability, and that art can both challenge and uplift.

Chancellor, I present to you Nick Mohammed for the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*.