



A revolutionary messiah? Who does this grubby darling of the Left think he's kidding?

By QUENTIN LETTS

PUBLISHED: 00:34, 2 November 2013 | UPDATED: 14:01, 2 November 2013

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Russell Brand, the fashionable Left's favourite comedian, was performing last Saturday in Cambridge. He strode across the stage, hyperactively jerking his limbs. He crouched, jumped up and down, did masturbatory gestures. How they laughed.

In a high-pitched, manic whine, Brand ranted about revolution, religion and sex. Photographs of Gandhi, Che Guevara and Adolf Hitler decorated the back wall, along with several of Brand himself. The audience, many of them pretty, 20-something women, sighed with pleasure. When Brand used the F word — which he did a lot — they cooed in pink-cheeked wonder at his brilliance, his daring. This was the latest gig on Brand's Messiah Complex stand-up tour, which is being marketed with a Communist-style image of Brand wearing, among other emblems, a Star of David and a swastika. The swastika as a fashion accessory?



His tour is taking in some 25 provincial venues, many of them university towns. Tickets cost about £50 — no small sum for students — but Messiah Russell, for all his talk of socialism, is as financially rapacious as a privatised-utility chief.

Sex is his selling point, sex the schtick. Those young women plainly were tantalised by him, even though he looks — how can we put this? — a mite diseased. One could make generalisations about women having always been attracted to herpetic Lotharios, but it might be incautious to do so.

But, on balance, it is important for Mail readers to know what this pied piper says, because he is now being projected by Left-wing opinion-formers as something more than a mere trader in larky profanities.

You and I might be tempted to think Russell Brand is simply a low-rent show-off who is making millions out of impressionable youngsters. But the bien pensants of London see him as something more important than that. They regard him as a cultural battering ram with which to create a mood of despair and anti-democratic (you could almost say Marxist) nihilism.

Last week, Brand was anointed as a public intellectual — nothing less than a political saviour — by the New Statesman magazine. The once-serious Left-wing weekly arranged for him to edit an entire 'revolution' issue in which he urged citizens not to vote: instead, they should topple the Western democratic system. To the barricades!

The magazine's staff, impeccably liberal and privileged, and in at least one case stonkingly rich (Jemima Khan, daughter of that unrelenting capitalist, the late Sir James Goldsmith), posed for a photograph with their guest-editor.

The snapshot, which was published in the magazine, was arranged like Leonardo's Last Supper, with Brand in the midst, a veritable Christ figure. It was hard to know whether to laugh or weep.

That stunt, in turn, earned Brand a prized interview slot on BBC2's Newsnight, which is run by a former deputy editor of The Guardian newspaper. Russell Brand was being promoted by our state broadcaster as someone with views worth hearing.

Here, apparently, was a Bernard Shaw de nos jours — except that when he had a chance to explain his ideas, unlike the celebrated socialist playwright and thinker, he was entirely incapable of doing so. Brand's arguments consisted of nothing more than a series of exaggerated assertions which ended with him pleading not to be scrutinised any further because he was merely a comedian.

The Reithian BBC once gave a pulpit to big-brained thinkers such as the scholar Sir Nikolaus Pevsner, novelist and broadcaster J.B. Priestley and dear old Jonathan Miller. Now it was giving us a celebrity dude with a hairy chest, a swastika round his neck and an addiction to F-words.

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What is it about this shallow snake-hipster that the Left so likes? Is he an altruist who really cares more about disadvantaged people than himself? His interest in money and his sybaritic lifestyle would suggest otherwise.

Is he a good role model for aspirational, working-class youths? Hardly. He jests about getting wasted, sleeping around, dressing in as confrontational a way as possible. He is the antithesis of the self-discipline, industry and (dirty words, I know) job-securing conformity that a youngster needs to get ahead.

You might have thought Brand's greedily self-indulgent views on sex, his tendency to judge women chiefly by their looks and to regard any 'babe' as a likely conquest would offend the professed feminism of the In-crowd. David Cameron only has to use the word 'dear' in a mild manner in the Commons to be denounced by the liberal Establishment as some sort of Neanderthal sexist.

Russell Brand (with his then partner-in-crime Jonathan Ross) used BBC airtime to broadcast the most degrading sexual insults about the granddaughter of one of our best-liked actors, Andrew Sachs. They even cracked jokes about the young woman's menstrual cycle.

Yet Brand is still idolised by the rich Lefties of North London. I tell you, if he went anywhere near my daughters when they are a little older I would resort to physical violence.

In their privileged cocoon, those who run the New Statesman and Newsnight clearly think it is OK to behave like a Brand. But in the working-class ghettos they are always telling us about? For the kids on apprentice schemes, or the young parents trying to save for a house, or the volunteers who run Church food banks and give their time as school governors: is Russell Brand really such great news for them?

This is not simply an argument against the Left. I know Labour MPs who recoil from Brand just as I do. The Labour Party has many decent members, people attracted by its past Methodist values. Brand is every bit as repulsive to them as he is to a pastoral, traditionalist rightie such as me.

In the New Statesman, he called on the young to abstain from voting. Is that not at odds with the Left's desire to lower the voting age to 16?

The same Left often talks of the importance of 'citizenship' and of promoting democratic engagement. Yet Brand, like the Labour leader's father, the late Ralph Miliband, argues that parliamentary democracy is unequal to the task, and he urges his disciples — his brainwashed groupies? — to boycott the ballot box and overthrow the Westminster system.

The comedian, who loves to use words like 'paradigm' and 'parameter' while never quite persuading us that he understands what they mean, relished the notion of political overthrow. He attacked the 'lies and treachery' of our elected politicians, the 'massive economic disparity' of Britain.

He declared that 'profit is a dirty word — wherever there is profit there is deficit'. Revolution was 'totally going to happen' and it was 'time to wake up' to that apparent fact. All this on the flagship current affairs programme of public-service television.

I happen to suspect that a moral revolution may well be around the corner. Not being a zealot, I shudder at the social readjustments that may loom.

But Brand will not mind. By then, he will have made enough millions to be living in some ranch in upstate California, boiling himself lobster-pink in a Jacuzzi full of goggle-eye handmaidens, his tour of Britain and his guest-editorship of the long-defunct New Statesman but a hazy memory.