

DAVID HASSELHOFF:
An American That Has Talent



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David Hasselhoff is a globally successful singer, actor, dancer and producer. Although he is mostly famous for his starring roles in two successful television series, it is in the area of music that David became a world renowned name. His success on the European pop charts brought him amazing fame and wealth. He now shares his knowledge and expertise with young performers on the reality show *America's Got Talent*. His rise to fame is quite impressive.

David Michael Hasselhoff was born on July 17, 1952 in Baltimore, Maryland to Joe and Delores Hasselhoff. His father was a business man and his mother did not work. He has four sisters. He claimed to have fallen in love with performing by age 7. His parents set him up with singing and acting lessons. His family moved a lot. They moved to Florida then Georgia and then to Illinois where he graduated from high school. He attended several colleges and earned a degree in theater from the California Institute of the Arts in Venice, California. He graduated with notable actors Paul Reubens (*Pee-Wee Herman*) and Katy Segal (*Married with Children* and *Futurama*).

His first big break was in 1975 on the soap opera *The Young and The Restless*. He portrayed Dr. William "Snapper" Foster Jr. That job led him to his next acting role as Simon in *Starcrash*. He showed off his vocal ability on the children's show *Kids Incorporated*. You may also have seen him in a guest appearance on a very special episode of *Diff'rent Strokes*.

His whole life changed when he was cast as Michael Knight on the futuristic television series *Knight Rider*. Although the show only ran from 1982 – 1986, it was a huge hit. Hasselhoff became a household name and his character's likeness could be found on multitudes of merchandising from cereal boxes to action figures. He became a hero and role model to young boys and a teen idol to young girls.

Michael used his television success as a springboard for his music career. He had a minor American hit with "Do You Love Me" – a remake of an old Motown tune and later "Jump into My Car". It was in Europe, especially the German speaking regions that loved Hasselhoff's music. His albums went gold there and he had sold out tours. In 1989, he released the "Pingu Dance" which was a rap song based on the children's claymation shorts. This single was released only in Switzerland, but can be heard on the International episodes.

David Hasselhoff can also boast that it was he, not U2 or Bruce Springsteen or Bob Dylan, that was singing about freedom as the Berlin Wall came tumbling down in 1989. That year brought David two European hits, "Looking for Freedom" and "Crazy for You". His albums have hit number one in Germany, Australia, and Switzerland.

It was also in 1989 that his second series *Baywatch* premiered. The show was cancelled after only one season. Hasselhoff thought the show had great potential, so he produced it with his own money and sold it into syndication. It was a smart move and the show *Baywatch* lasted

another ten seasons. It was a worldwide hit and has been seen in over 100 countries around the world. *The Guinness Book of World Records* awarded David Hasselhoff with the category of “Largest TV audience – series”. (Tested at its peak of popularity, *Baywatch* became the most widely viewed TV series in the world ever, with an estimated weekly audience of more than 1.1 billion in 142 countries in 1996. Covering every continent bar Antarctica, the show has since been seen in 148 countries and translated into 44 languages.) The show has since spawned two others series, *Baywatch Nights* and *Baywatch Hawaii*.

In 1994, David set up a pay-per-view concert for cable viewers. He had hoped that this concert would help revive his music career. Unfortunately, his concert was on June 17th, the same night that O.J. Simpson was involved in a slow-speed chase in a white Bronco down the highway in Southern California. The live footage of O.J.’s escape (which was on every channel and viewed by an estimated audience of 95 million) hurt Hasselhoff’s rating. He did not try to reschedule the show. Although that concert did not work out, Hasselhoff was a huge star and was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

His musical talents opened up many stage doors for him. He has starred in a long line of successful musicals such as *Grease!* (Danny Zucco), *Chicago* (Billy Flynn), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Judas Iscariot), *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, and *The Producers* (Roger DeBris). One of these most notable performances was the lead role of London’s stage adaption of *Jekyll and Hyde*. This performance brought him strong reviews and was shown on PBS and American cable channels.

David was married twice. His first marriage was to actress Catherine Hickland and that lasted five years and they divorced in 1989. His second marriage was to Pamela Bach. Two daughters were born from this marriage. His personal troubles have been tabloid news for some time and some unfortunate video footage has been released on the internet by his own daughter. The video showed David in an unattractive light but he has said his daughter had his best interests in mind.

David Hasselhoff is also famous for the many parodies on his career and personality. He has become such a well-known figure that his image consistently earns a reaction – both positive and negative. He has parodied himself in several movies such as *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie* and *Dodge Ball: A True Underdog Story*. Fans have nicknamed him “The Hoff” leading to the catch phrase and bumper sticker advice: “Don’t Hassel the Hoff”.

In the summer of 2006, Hasselhoff was a co-judge on the reality show *America’s Got Talent*. He stayed on the judging panel for the first four seasons and audiences loved the comments he shared with the amateurs. During his final season, he sang “This Is The Moment” on the show’s finale.

In the fall of 2006, a British website tried to bring fans together to bring David the respect and recognition he deserves. The site was www.gethasselhofftonumber1.com. This is how the site explained its plan:

“On October 3, 2006 the Hoff Alert was mailed out to over 40,000 who signed up on this website, instructing them to buy "Jump In My Car" in hopes that it would top the UK Singles Chart. Hasselhoff promptly gained his highest ever UK chart entry (#3) on October 8, 2006.”

The good intentioned plan received a lot of press (both positive and negative) and the website tallied 46,013 music fans who signed up for the alert.

Since so many people were trying to make money off his name and image, David came up with his own social networking service which he aptly named HoffSpace. In December 2008, David had the honor of singing the national anthem at the NCAA Las Vegas Bowl. He was in great form and pitch-perfect, but few heard his performance since the network chose not to broadcast his moment.

Always the businessman, Hasselhoff finds other outlets for his talent. He has made several commercials for Pipex and Pepsi. His latest conquest has been lending his voice to video games. You can hear Hasselhoff, along with Justin Timberlake, Brad Pitt, and David Beckham, in the Wii boxing game *Ready 2 Rumble Revolution*.

The illustrious career of David Michael Hasselhoff deserves more credit than it receives. His career has spanned three decades and his talents have touched the live stage, the big screen, the small screen and the internet. He is a man to be recognized. A man who has talent.

LOOKING FOR FREEDOM music and lyrics by Jack White

One morning in June some twenty years ago I was born a rich man's son
I had everything that money could buy But freedom - I had none

I've been lookin' for freedom I've been lookin' so long I've been lookin' for freedom
Still the search goes on
I've been lookin' for freedom Since I left my home town I've been lookin' for freedom
Still it can't be found

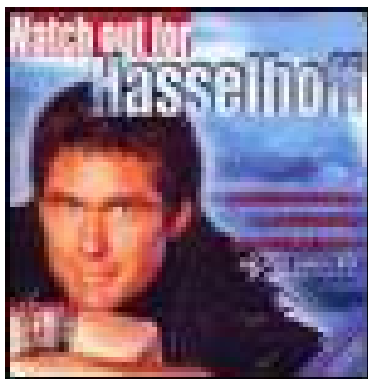
I headed down the track, my baggage on my back I left the city far behind
Walkin' down the road, with my heavy load Tryin' to find some peace of mind
Father said you'll be sorry, son, If you leave your home this way
And when you realize the freedom money buys You'll come running home some day

I paid a lotta dues, had plenty to lose Travelling across the land
Worked on a farm, got some muscle in my arm But still I'm not a self-made man
I'll be on the run for many years to come I'll be searching door to door

But, given some time, some day I'm gonna find
The freedom I've been searchin' for



Album *Looking for Freedom*



Album *Watch Out For David Hasselhoff*

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<http://www.guinnessbookworldrecord.com>: Most watched television series

<http://www.gethasselhofftonumber1.com>: fan site trying to help Hasselhoff top the pop charts

<http://calarts.edu/theater/notablealumni>: graduates from his college