



Left to right:
Neil Mullarkey,
Josie Lawrence,
Richard Vranich,
Sandi Toksvig,
Paul Merton

1986

▼ On the early years

Neil Mullarkey: 'One of my funniest memories is having a try-out in the summer of 1985 at the Edinburgh Fringe at a community centre. We'd had an afternoon to learn the improv games. It was a tiny audience, all of whom stayed. But the cast didn't, leaving Mike Myers and me stranded.'



Left to right:
Kit Hollerbach,
Richard Vranich,
Jeremy Hardy,
Paul Merton,
Josie Lawrence,
Neil Mullarkey

1989

◀ On their guest performers

Neil: 'We've worked with a veritable Who's Who of people you may well have heard of... Including Peter Egan, Tom Watt, Nicholas Parsons, Liza Goddard, Tommy Whitt from that garden thing, Trigger off "Only Fools..." and Gina Lollobrigida. One of those is a lie.'

Lee Simpson: 'I'm in the box Sandi is standing on. They said the newest member of the group always started in the box.'

Richard Vranich: 'It looks like the album cover of an ageing rock band. Have we become the Fleetwood Mac of comedy?'

25 years of the Comedy Store Players

The London improv institution celebrates its quarter-century on October 31.

Tim Arthur digs through the photo archives with some of the team



Left to right: Andy Smart,
Richard Vranich, Josie
Lawrence, Lee Simpson, Paul
Merton, Neil Mullarkey



Left to right:
Paul Merton,
Lee Simpson,
Neil Mullarkey,
Josie Lawrence,
Richard Vranich,
Jim Sweeney

1992

▲ On being close

Lee: 'By some alarming coincidence, the jagged outlines of our damaged and dented psyches dovetail together like a personality disorder jigsaw puzzle.'

Neil: 'Paul has always been a fan of The Beatles, so taking his shoes off seemed the right thing to do.'

Lee: 'He was also the only one who refused to have anal sex. He's always been very difficult.'

2010

◀ On the future

Paul Merton: 'We're going to keep going until we get it right... Until somebody laughs.'

Andy Smart: 'Plus we've got nowhere else to go on a Wednesday or Sunday night.'

Josie Lawrence: 'We're like a dysfunctional family; I can't imagine life without them. We've got older over the past 25 years, but thankfully we're none the wiser.'