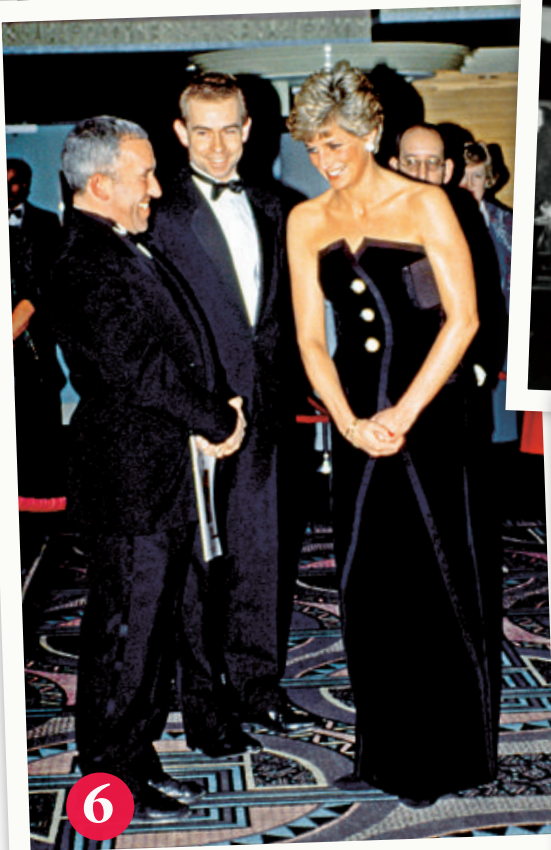


DESERT ISLAND PICS

Simon Callow

Four Weddings, two princesses, one funeral... and a PM! The actor's life in pictures

A three-year-old Callow meets Father Christmas in a department store



1 Dearly departed, 1994
People don't realise I wore a fat suit for *Four Weddings...* and I only grew the beard so the padding didn't show over my collar. It's so sad to see Charlotte in the photo [Charlotte Coleman died in 2001 aged 33 after an asthma attack]. She was intense and emotionally incontinent, but she had the touch of a comic genius, which is so very rare to find.

2 Right Royal friend, 1980
I got to know Margaret reasonably well over the years and she was always imperious, witty and often quite rude. I remember during one luncheon at a house she suddenly got up and said, 'I believe this delightful little meeting is now over.' With that, she walked out, swiftly followed by her security team.

3 Kidnapped! 1956
I was seven and had just started at St Peter's Catholic School in Guildford. It was a boarding school and I remember being devastated that I had been abandoned.

4 Terrible trio, 2009
Playing Pozzo in Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* alongside Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart. A friend overheard a conversation during the interval when a woman said, 'I don't know what it's all about!' Her husband shot back: 'You know perfectly well that you've come to see Gandalf and Jean-Luc Picard and that queer from *Four Weddings And A Funeral!*' Exquisitely put!

5 Daddy dearest – not! 1970
A very rare photograph of me with my father, Neil, who abandoned my mother and I when I was 18 months old. He was briefly back from Zambia to visit his mother Toto and her sister Titi – who is next to me. I was led to believe he had come back to celebrate my 21st birthday with me, but he actually never showed up for that. My encounters with him were awkward and charmless.

6 A date to Di for, 1990
This is with Princess Diana at the premiere for *Postcards From The Edge*. She said, 'I expect you have seen this many times. I hope you are not going to fall asleep on me!' I remember her being particularly amused by some of the racy humour.

7 A Major player, 1991
My rather peculiar suit gives this away as the Nineties! I was invited to one of those events when 'the stars' come to Downing Street. I remember John Major being a bit bemused when I started talking to him in probably an over-familiar way about the history of the Victorian music halls, because we both have family connections with that era. We have since become quite good friends. *Simon Callow is in 'Playhouse Presents... Space Age' on Sky Arts 1, June 5 at 9pm*

INTERVIEW BY ROB MCIBBON. PICTURES SIMON CALLOW/GETTY/ALLSTAR/ALPHA/BBC/NIGEL NORRINGTON