

NOEL FIELDING

Much can be learned about comedian Noel Fielding from the fact that he has a favourite cape. It is black with a standing collar, crimson lining, and two red ties to fasten it at the neck. It appears in multiple video clips of Fielding and is mentioned in several of his interviews. Favourite suggests plurality. A telling fact indeed.

There has always been something of the fancy dress costume box about Fielding. Since his emergence in the mid-2000s as one of the founders of surrealist comedy troupe The Mighty Boosh, much of Fielding's appeal has been rooted in the idea that he's a daydreaming Peter Pan, a benign man-child set loose in a boring world for grown-ups. When Fielding tried his hand at painting in 2011, it was in typical child-like fashion. He donned a canary yellow boiler suit and tramped around the shop window of Waterstone's in Manchester, painting crude blue cats across the glass.

This impression of Fielding as a proto-Lost Boy is exacerbated by the way in which both he and his Boosh counterpart—the Bryan Ferry-worshipping zookeeper Vince Noir—like to dress. A Fielding outfit is a dervish of colliding styles, combining ponchos, sequined bodysuits, fur coats, skin-tight jeans and skirts, cowboy hats, and bandanas with care-free abandon to create a kaleidoscopic whole. It's a style that is reminiscent of glam rock, but Fielding always seems too deliriously joyful to affect a genuine smoulder like Bowie or Eno. All big features and cheerful grin, Fielding looks like a *Just William* schoolboy who's broken into Mark Bolan's dressing room and is thrilled to have found the feather boas. 'It's impossible to be unhappy while wearing a poncho,' Fielding once quipped in an interview and it might as well be his mantra.

Born in 1973, Fielding grew up in London before moving to study graphic design at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College. It was in nearby High Wycombe that Fielding founded The Mighty Boosh in 1998, after watching the more established stand-up comedian Julian Barratt perform at the Hellfire Comedy Club. Subsequently working together, Barratt and Fielding later confessed that the main goal of their collaboration was to create a Goodies for the twenty-first century, a change in direction from the first tentative steps in solo comedy that Fielding had already taken prior to meeting Barratt, in which he liked to appear on stage dressed as Jesus Christ and descend from a cross to dance to Mick Jagger songs.

**'Some people have a fear of being on stage.
I have a fear of coming off it.'**

Noel Fielding

