

ON THE BALL

Issue 64



Hi Everyone

Here we are at the end of 2013 with our very first full colour issue. However, some things don't change and it's been another excitingly busy year for Michael. He was sitting in the BBC Radio 2 studio recording his Sunday night programme, when he got the phone call from ITV, asking if he could please come and host the Paul O'Grady Show for them. Michael says YES, just let me know when, to which they reply... in a couple of hours!

Once again our thanks go out to everyone who sends us photos and reports for possible inclusion in this magazine. When we wrote and told you that Live Nation would not be producing an official 2014 calendar your response was brilliant as you will see. Many thanks as always go to James who fantastically managed to produce the pull-out calendar section.

As you will have read in Michael's letter (yes, we know that's the first thing most of you read!) there are going to be lots of new challenges ahead for Michael next year. He told us that Victoria Woods BBC film "Tubby and Enid" will take January and February to film.

We must also thank Chris and Pat for all their work, Andrew and Live Nation for their support and those of you who constantly post on the forum and facebook every little snippet of news that pops up.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year.

Love

Maureen and Gill

PS Just as we're sending this to press the first photos appear from Shanghai!



Layout by James Gaden - www.solitaryvision.co.uk

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Dear Everyone,

Well it looks like 2013 is going to end much the same way as it began. Busy and heralding a new year that is full of new challenges, interesting opportunities and the chance to explore areas of myself professionally that I haven't had the chance to before. I LOVE MY JOB!!!

Firstly, thank you for all the wonderful feedback with regard to the 'Both Sides Now' D.V.D. That album and tour rank among my favorite of all time. I'm so happy you seemed to agree and it's a joy for me to be able to relive it. Work is starting on a new album, which is scheduled for Oct/Nov 2014 and I hope to tour with that new material

in the spring of 2015.... but you know me well enough by now to know that anything can change.

So from now till Christmas, I am off to Shanghai (still can't believe some of you are coming to see me there... amazing) Doing the S.S. Chase charity concert, and rehearsing Victoria Woods new B.B.C. film. (Oh, and of course making a date with you all on Sunday Night!!)

The Victoria Wood project is so exciting. I am a huge fan of her work as you know, and she has written and is directing the most poignant, funny, beautiful script and I get to work with my lovely Imelda again. My Cup truly runneth over. Never been more nervous and thrilled about anything as much as this, I just hope it turns out as we all hope it will.

Of course there will be loads of opportunities for us to meet up somewhere, sometime in 2014. This year will mark my 30th in the Business and for most of those years I have had you to inspire, support and delight me. What an amazing time we have had and I hope we will have many more together.

This is a strange, tough and fickle world sometimes and to have been blessed with so much continuity, kindness and love is an extraordinary gift. As ever, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Have a wonderful Christmas, and I pray for us all to enjoy an abundance of health and happiness in 2014.

God Bless My loves

always

Michael
x



A VERY SPECIAL PHONE CALL

by Wayne, Scott and Sandra Allen

My brother and I decided to surprise our mum, as she is a huge Michael Ball fan and long-time member of the Fan Club. Never in our wildest dreams did we think that Michael would have time to talk to people on the phone as he was busy doing his DVD signing but he did, just goes to show what a genuine star he is! This is my mum's account:

It was 12th November, about 6:30 when my husband received a call from our son Scott, who lives in London. He wanted to make sure that I would pick up the phone when he called back in about 10 minutes.

Sure enough the phone went and I picked it up, a lovely voice said, "Is that Sandra?" I answered, "Yes..." and he said "It's Michael Ball here". I said "You've got to be kidding me!" He replied "No!" and asked "What's the name of your son?" I said "Scott," and he said Scott was sitting next to him and he had asked him to speak to me.

Although I'm known for talking a lot, it left me speechless! Michael then went on to say I had a lovely present coming (guess I know what that is!) and said I have a lovely son. He then asked how to spell my name and said it was lovely speaking to me, lots of love and good bye.

I am and have been a Fan Club member for many years, and now I'm walking around saying I don't believe what happened. What a lovely thing to do!



Dulwich DVD Signing by Sharon Scarrott

When Nikki and Sue Blackstone asked me to accompany them to the signing at Dulwich I decided to take them up on their offer as I was recovering from recent surgery. I thought the best medicine would be to see Michael!

On arrival at Sainsburys we noticed that there were no posters or any advertising regarding the signing, so went to information to check that Michael was definitely going to be there and were relieved when they confirmed that he would be.

Eventually some of the staff appeared with a table and a chair and two boards that held large posters. They had some flowers which looked rather drab. A lady who worked for Sainsburys came along and asked us what flowers Michael liked so we chose

roses from their display. One of the girls in the queue who was there to get a DVD signed for her boss said she was a florist, so off she went to arrange the flowers and she did a great job.

Although the crowd was small they were a nice bunch and we had plenty of laughs. The staff at Sainsburys were very friendly and excited about meeting Michael.

There was great excitement when Michael arrived and everyone was thrilled to see him. Nikki went up first with Sue and I taking photos – of course there was the usual banter from Michael. When it was my turn I was all in a tizz as usual! Fortunately I managed to exchange a few words with Michael before posing for my photo.



Michael at Sainsburys pictured with Nikki Louise Blackstone, Nikki's mum Sue, Sharron Scarrott and Sheila Salter.

Whilst he was signing, a little lady came along and asked me where she could find the DVD's as she would like Michael to sign one for her. I pointed her in the right direction and off she went. I took a photo of her when it was her turn and her face was a picture. I wish I knew who she was as I would send her a copy!



HMV Oxford Street Signing by Joan Johnson

The security people and HMV staff were lovely, friendly and welcoming. A cheer went up when Michael arrived, as he was a little late. He had a quick photo session with the HMV publicity team, who stayed throughout the proceedings. Some of them spoke to us and seemed amazed that we were all friends because of Michael.

bit of a chat with all the fans.

After seeing Michael individually, some of us stayed and watched the proceedings. Once everyone had been seen and there was no longer a queue, the HMV publicity staff were happy for us to have a group photo with Michael on the assumption he was happy about it – and of course he was!

We went forward to see Michael one at a time and everyone had a picture with him. He didn't seem to be in any rush and had a

All in all it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening with Michael and some good pals.



Michael Presented With The Honorary Doctorate of Arts



Here is Michael, together with his very proud father Tony Ball, as he collected his Honorary Doctorate of Arts at Plymouth University.

MICHAEL ON THE TELLY

As well as appearing on *This Morning* and *Toast Of London*, there are a few things to look forward to that Michael has already recorded, but have yet to be broadcast...



This Morning



Celebrity Catchphrase



Toast Of London



The Great British Bake Off



Room 101



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Photo: Val Scott



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Photo: Jane Rhodes



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Photo: Aislinn Godfrey



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Photo: Joan Johnson



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Photo: Alister Godfrey



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Photo: Jane Rhodes



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Photo: Sharon Scarrott



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Photo: Jane Rhodes

DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING?



Thirty years ago, the creative team of Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg changed the history of musical theatre with their masterpiece *Les Misérables*. Their music was celebrated in an exclusive concert evening, performed by a full orchestra and choir, headlined by some of the world's most popular musical theatre stars. *Do You Hear The People Sing?* saw Michael return to Shanghai to perform in a concert that featured songs from *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon* and much more. Here Michael is pictured in rehearsals and having dinner with co-stars David Harris, Amanda Harrison and Alain Boublil himself.




CLARIDGE'S

Michael recently attended the Carers Trust Event in Claridges, where he was pictured with Princess Anne. Jeffrey Archer tweeted that one lucky bidder paid £4,000 to have dinner with Michael!



REMEMBERING AUDREY WILES

I'd like to pay tribute to my very dear friend Audrey Wiles, who sadly passed away on December 18th 2012 after a long illness.

Audrey was a very loving mum sister, sister-in-law and auntie who will be greatly missed by all her family and friends.

When I first became a fan of Michael, I was on my own. On seeing him in *Passion*, Audrey and her sister-in law Gwen stood up to let me get to my seat beside them. During the interval we exchanged addresses.



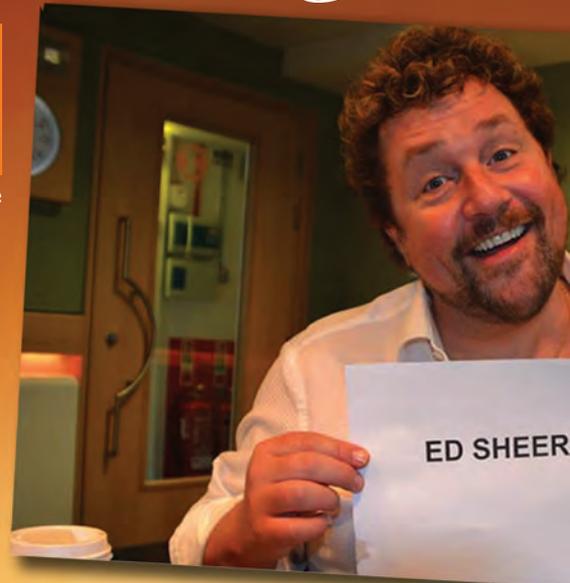
Later Audrey invited me to share the same table at the first Fan Club Event I ever attended at the Ibis hotel about 16 years ago. Since then we travelled all over the world, including Australia and New York.

We always had a fantastic time with all our lovely Michael fans. I will always have wonderful memories to treasure. I really will miss her very much.

Rest In Peace dear Audrey.
Sweet dreams,
Nora (Charters)

MICHAEL ON BBC RADIO 2

Michael sat in for Ken Bruce on Radio 2 twice this year and had a great time. Here are some of the photos that were posted on their website.





ABU DHABI - A WHIRLWIND TRIP!

By Jen Garner

First I was going, then I wasn't but how glad I am that I went! Wherever do I begin? I'll try and paint a picture of the highlights of this trip.

On arrival at Abu Dhabi airport, I discovered that my luggage had been left behind at Heathrow and I didn't set eyes on it again until 1½ hours before my flight back home. Hmm – tricky as I had only the clothes I stood up in and one or two bare essentials so... I would just have to fit in some shopping!

Anyway, I arrived too late on the Friday night for Michael's concert and met up with Donna and Jay for "cocktails and dancing". They had found a great little club in the Souk, which was part of our complex. I have to say that our hotel, The Traders between The Bridges, was out of this world and looked after us very well indeed. It was also very good value compared to UK prices.

It was up early the next morning to catch the free hotel shuttle bus. The bus took Donna and Jay to look round a beautiful mosque and me to the fantastic Marina Shopping Mall to buy an outfit for Michael's Saturday concert and other necessities.

Luckily Donna and I are similar in size so she was kind enough to help me out!

The shuttle bus trip was great as it took me all around Abu Dhabi City and Yas Island, so I saw quite a lot in a short space of time. I have to say that the buildings and scenery were superb, simply breathtaking.

It was then back to the hotel to get ready for the evening concert. Firstly we treated ourselves to a lovely Dim Sum meal in the Viceroy Hotel near to the Du Forum venue. Before we knew it, it was time to welcome the orchestra, Adrian, Soophia and Alice and of course Michael on to the stage and WOWEE - what a reception they got!

It was perfectly lovely and with such a feeling of pride that song after song was received with heartfelt enthusiasm. I don't know if the rest of the audience knew exactly what to expect (and really nor did we) but they responded magnificently. "Michael and Team" seemed to soar higher and higher on the waves of clapping and cheering. Except for the addition of 'Help Yourself' the set list was the same as Audley End so I won't repeat it.

Michael chatted happily and comfortably between performing. He mentioned his Olivier Awards and said he'd cheated a bit over 'The Prayer' and that he'd included it because he loved it, although it was the only one not from a musical. One and all loved him and his team.

At the end, as always, he invited everyone up to dance and needless to say a few of us went to the front to party! I looked around and saw most of the audience on their feet dancing in their seats. They were possibly not sure if they should go to the front or not but were certainly having a good time. The final applause was deafening and I feel sure no one had been disappointed with 'The King of The Musicals'.

Donna, Jay and I were fortunate enough to see Michael leave and have a bit of banter - me about my lost luggage and Donna about her fear of flying!

Yes Michael it was **Very Hot** but very worthwhile!

They say it's a small world. Well, I sat next to a chap now living and working in Abu Dhabi, who recognised my accent and it



turned out that he came from my hometown in Lancashire and knew people that I knew. Would you believe it?!

I was due to leave the hotel at 11:00 p.m. the next day (Sunday) – so no time to lose. The day was spent swimming in the Persian Gulf, a boat trip around our complex, a browse around the Souk (Market) and a lovely lunch and cocktails at our hotel. Then we were off “on safari” for five hours. This entailed Dune-Bashing in big 4 x 4’s, which was terrifying but brilliant. We also tried sand surfing, camel riding, belly dancing, Henna tattoos, dressing up in Burkas, eating and thoroughly enjoying ourselves. In no time at all I was taking a quick taxi ride to the airport hoping to be re-united with my luggage and at the very last minute it was safely retrieved.

Donna and Jay had to be the photographers as, guess what, my camera was in my case. Ah well, all’s well that ends well!

experience and I’m so glad that I went to Abu Dhabi. Thank you Mr. Ball for taking me to new and exciting places.

It was a hot and totally wonderful

Assalamu alaikum!



GULF NEWS CONCERT REVIEW

Fans of Broadway and the West End were treated to two memorable nights full of hit songs from the world’s biggest musicals as British star Michael Ball took the stage for *Michael Ball Sings the Musicals* at Yas Island’s du Forum in Abu Dhabi on Friday and Saturday.

Ball gave fans a taste of the West End — London’s theatre district — as he performed songs from musicals such as *Les Misérables*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats*, *Hairspray*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Chess*, *Lion King* and *Kismet* among others.

Kicking off with ‘This is the Moment’ from *Jekyll and Hyde* and ‘Don’t Rain on My Parade’ from *Funny Girl*, the concert was packed with everything from classics to contemporary favourites.

Showing off his wide vocal range, Ball left the audience in awe (and some in tears) as he performed the Celine Dion/ Andrea Bocelli duet ‘The Prayer’ with a band member. With great chemistry between the two singers, the performance was nothing short of immaculate.

After an interval, the two-time Olivier Award winner came back, joking, “I always like to take a break to go outside and stand in the cool... but I love it [the weather].”

Ball’s jokes kept coming as he spoke about each song before performing it. Discussing *Sweeney Todd* for which he won



Michael on Classic FM Abu Dhabi

an Olivier Award, he recalled practicing a gracious loser face before the awards ceremony as he did not expect to win. He also warned before performing a song from the musical, “I’d be singing it and blood would be gushing so, front row, just watch yourselves.”

Apart from his ever-so-mesmerising voice, which made for beautifully-performed songs, Ball was a great dancer, eliciting cheers from the crowd as he swayed across the stage.

Ball was accompanied on stage by the British Philharmonic Orchestra and three singers from the West End.

His performance was also complemented by exceptional lighting, which changed to suit the mood of every song — blood-red for songs from *Sweeney*

Todd, orange for songs from the *Lion King*.

One of the audience members, Tim Senior, an Irishman based in Abu Dhabi, described the concert as, “wonderful”.

“[Ball] has that wow-factor. He’s very warm and great with the crowd and he brings the place to life,” Senior said, adding that he had never seen the singer before.

“The venue is very intimate, the lighting is excellent, and the orchestra really complements his voice,” he noted.

With a voice like Ball’s, it is no surprise there was consensus among the crowd.

“[Ball’s] voice is amazing. ‘The Prayer’ actually brought a bit of tears, I must admit,” Vera Sibarani, an Indonesian audience member based in Abu Dhabi, said. “I just really enjoyed it.”

Jery Sokol, a Canadian living in Dubai came to the capital especially to attend the concert, which he described as, “very entertaining,” adding that it gave him a push to visit London’s West End.

By the end of the concert, the crowd was avidly hoping for more and as Ball came back for an encore, he strangely seemed to have more energy than before, singing ‘You Can’t Stop the Beat’ from *Hairspray*, Tom Jones’ ‘Help Yourself’ and Elvis Presley’s ‘The Wonder of You’.

Sarah Diaa is trainee at Gulf News.

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT



Here's Michael when he appeared in Spamalot as the celebrity Voice of God. He joined Bonnie Langford and the rest of the cast for one night only when they finished the show with "Always Look on the Bright Side".



TOUCHING MICHAEL'S BOTTOM!



I thought I must drop you a few lines regarding my mother, Shirley Bulleyment, who is a member of the Fan Club.

Shirley appeared on the Alan Titchmarsh programme aired on Friday

20 September 2013 with Michael Ball, Coleen Nolan and Alan Titchmarsh.

She was originally just in the audience but they asked for volunteers who may have a confession to make to go into a

confessional box alongside Coleen. This is how the confession panned out:

"My name is Shirley Bulleyment from East Yorkshire and I am 74 years old. My confession is that recently I touched a young man's bottom.

"I touched it because I had been accused by the young man for touching his bottom (which I had not done) but I thought if I've been accused of it, I'm going to do it now anyway!

"The young man in question was Michael Ball!"

With this, the confessional curtain was removed to reveal my mum, who then made her way to Michael!

I have attached a photograph when my mum and friend Pauline attended a meet and greet with Michael and this is when the incident happened.

Lesley Webb

THE MICHAEL BALL FAN CLUB ONLINE

You can find our website at
www.mbfcc.co.uk

Our site features a very active forum where many a debate has gone on between fans from all over the world. You can also find all the latest news and photos - why not check it out today?

There is also a Fan Club Members Forum for fan club members only. The password to access it is 'FIFTYONE51'.



MOVING HOUSE?

Don't forget to let us have your new address so you don't miss out on any important information.

Please remember to enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you want a reply to your letter.

IMPORTANT!

Please remember to use the correct postage when sending items to the fan club, especially if your envelope is larger than 240mm x 165mm as it costs more than the standard size!

NO MORE NEWS LEAFLETS? DON'T FORGET THE INFOLINE!

The Fan Club announced in April it was restructuring the membership system, no longer offering a service where news items are posted out. The news is often outdated by the time the news leaflets are typed, printed and dispatched, and with email updates available within hours of the news being announced, the cost of print and postage was an unnecessary expense.

Some fans expressed concern that they may not have email or internet access. You can register a relative's email address who can pass any news on to you. Alternatively, don't forget the Fan Club offers the **Infoline**!

Simply call the **Infoline** number to hear what Michael is up to, news about concerts or where you can see him. Every **Infoline** bulletin is dated, so it's easy to keep up to date with what's going on!



INCLUDES EXCLUSIVE BONUS CD

NEW
FOR 2013!
FEATURING
EXCLUSIVE
TRACKS

B O T H S I D E S N O W
MICHAEL
BALL

LIVE IN
LONDON

