

ON THE BALL

Issue 65



Hi Everyone

Where does the time go? Can't believe that it's five years since Michael was celebrating 25 years in show business, so it's now his 30th anniversary - the years certainly just seem to roll by so quickly. It sounds like he's got a few surprises in store for us with his new album - you know Michael, he likes to come up with something different every time.

Thanks for all your kind words about our first full colour magazine that many of you purchased just before Christmas. We're sure that you won't be disappointed with this issue. Many thanks also goes to those of you who send us your articles and photos - keep them coming! We will be needing reviews from the Lytham Proms on the 3 August and the Alhambra Theatre in Bradford on Saturday 20th September for OTB 66.

Even though there haven't been as many live performances this year as some of us would like, it's been a joy to hear Michael on a daily basis when he sits in for Ken Bruce on Radio 2, plus of course the regular Sunday Night With Michael Ball. We love listening to this and hearing familiar names that we know are fan club members being mentioned on the show.

Thank you to everyone who sent in donations for Michael's charities in place of buying birthday presents, he really does appreciate any amount donated, however small, and it all makes a difference. We will let you know the final total via a News Update as soon as it's all tallied up.

No doubt Michael will be popping up here, there and everywhere and we will endeavour to keep you up to date and informed of his activities by our regular email news updates. Please make sure to let us know if you change your email address, or indeed you are not receiving messages from us regularly so we can make sure your details are correct.

Love

Maureen and Gill

Dear Everyone,

How are you all? Well and happy I hope and looking forward to a great summer. It's going to be a relatively quiet one for me on the live performing front. Only the concert in Lytham - St. Anne's as one of the guests of the Hallé orchestra and then a special celebration in Bradford in September.

I wanted to do something with the Hallé having worked with them on "That Day We Sang" (the new title for "Tubby and Eric".... and I prefer it!!) I am seeing the final edit of that in a couple of weeks and I'm so excited.

It really isn't like anything else I've done and I have no idea how people will react. I just know I had the best time making it and I am so proud to have been a part of it.

So the summer months are mainly going to be spent in the studio doing my new album which we should be releasing in November and then announcing next year's tour. I think it's something like my 20th solo album and it's my 30th year in the business. Blimey!! Not sure if I want to make a huge song and dance about that but I am so proud and happy and satisfied when I look back at all

the amazing times I've had and look forward to the wonderful challenges ahead..... and you are always there, my loves, supporting me and inspiring me to do what I love.

Thank you, with all my heart, and see you very soon,

Love Mike
X

AFTERNOON TEA – WITH MICHAEL!



You can imagine our delight when Liz Davy writes and tells us back in December that she flew from Scotland to attend the Shooting Star Chase gala in London with her daughter and was lucky enough to place the winning bid for tea with Michael! She was very excited. We wrote straight back and asked her to tell us more:

“I had booked the gala months ago when it was first advertised for my daughter and me. Any excuse to go to London to see her, and the bonus of an appearance by Michael. My husband refused to go so yet another bonus! I was so disappointed when he had to pull out, but with tickets booked, flight booked and hotel booked thought it will still be a lovely trip. It is a fabulous charity and until I arrived I had no idea that Michael had donated an auction prize of tea for two. My daughter was determined to bid, especially as she had gone up to Oxford Street to get my DVD signed and had told him about my disappointment in not seeing him at the gala. So long story short, tea with Michael probably sometime in the New Year!”

March is when she wrote again:

“Really looking forward to spending a bit of time just with Michael, and despite the fact that next Friday is my 33rd wedding anniversary, I am so looking

forward to it. My long suffering husband’s comment when I plucked up the courage to tell him the date was “So you are spending our anniversary with the man you are really in love with?” to which my response was “Well, yes!” We are going out on the Saturday to one of our favourite restaurants for dinner, so hopefully that will make it up to him, and his incredible patience over the last 32 years, since my first *Les Mis* experience at the Barbican.”

So here’s what happened:

“I had a fantastic afternoon, and was astonished how much we had in common.

The last book I read was the same as Michael, we both love country music, believe firmly in no to independence and are both addicted to American drama. It was a varied conversation!

“We had a bit of a debate over France versus Italy, but I may have convinced him to give Rome a try.

“We didn’t stop talking for over two hours and he is the most adorable man.”

So here are a couple of the lovely photos of Liz, Michael and her daughter Emma taken during the afternoon tea. Thanks go to Andrew Ross for taking them.



THE PERFECT PITCH AWARDS

Michael was one of the judges at the Perfect Pitch Awards which were held in St. James Theatre in London.

He said: "It was a unanimous decision, but not until we'd discussed everything at length and seen the merits in all the pitches. All of the shows have potential and the writing partnerships are exciting. But when it came down the wire we were totally enraptured with the winning pitch, and we wanted to know what happens next, which is exactly what you want."

The award of £12,000 went to Chris Bush and Matthew Winkworth, the writers of 'Odd' which will now be developed through workshops and be presented as a professionally staged reading next year.



SHOP WITH THE STARS

Michael recently joined a host of celebrities for 'Shop With The Stars'.

Fenwick of Bond Street, official fashion partner to The Olivier Awards 2014, saw the stars take to the shop floor to serve and entertain Bond Street customers to raise money for The Olivier Awards' charity partner, Acting For Others.

Michael, Sheila Hancock, Emilia Fox, Camilla Kerslake and Ollie Locke were assigned departments from beauty to handbags with Christopher Biggins meeting and greeting customers as they arrived to shop.



That Day St. Julie's Visited Filming



St. Julie's Catholic High School's Sixth Form Performing Arts students have just been on a surprise field trip into Woolton Village to visit the set of 'That Day We Sang' (previously called 'Tubby and Enid'), a television adaptation of Victoria Wood's successful stage musical that has been

commissioned by BBC 2.

Set in 1929 and 1969, and starring Michael Ball and Imelda Staunton, the story has at its core the iconic recording of 'Nymphs And Shepherds' sung by the Manchester Children's Choir in 1929. We

begin the story of one of those children, Jimmy, as he prepares for the great day, then jump ahead 40 years to a reunion of that same choir being filmed for a documentary.

The students got the chance to meet both Michael Ball and Victoria Wood on set, and the documentary theme extended into real life as Mr Ball interviewed the students for the documentary on how the production is being made!

Here are a few more photos that were taken during the filming:





Michael raises the roof at the Heritage Motor Centre

This article appeared on the forum, thanks to Carole Peacock:

the end of December.

The Heritage Motor Centre played host to the 29th Annual Luncheon of the Federation of Motoring Industry on St George's day, the 23 April. 250 Fellows & their guests were entertained by a number of accomplished speakers including a speech and performance by Michael Ball who raised the roof singing 'Jerusalem' in magnificent style!

The luncheon was co-ordinated by Sheila Cook and Lisa Locke from the HMC conference team. Sheila happens to be a huge fan of Michael Ball and was delighted to meet him on what was also her birthday!

Michael Ball spoke in a wonderfully lighthearted manner about his upbringing and his fond memories of his father's involvement with the FMI over the years.

It was actually the 21st luncheon held by the Federation at the HMC which was timely as the HMC celebrates its 21st birthday on Thursday 1 May. The Centre opened on 1 May 1993 and is celebrating this momentous occasion by hosting a special exhibition "21 Years 21 Icons" featuring products and people that represent the very best of British motoring which visitors can view until

A raffle was held on the day to win a case of champagne and a bottle of Whisky which raised £1,630 for the BEN charity, the UK's dedicated charity for those who work, or have worked, in the automotive and related industries, as well as their dependants.

Pictured: Michael with Sheila Cook and Lisa Locke from the conference team.



Michael, a Mai Tai and NYC

by Nancy Garcia

In this modern day of social media we hear both pros and cons on its usage. Well, we found a very positive use for it... Michael Ball tracker!

When Michael tweeted that he was in New York recently, a few of us thought of trying to locate him in this vast city. But as we have often said, Michael had to be the one who wanted to be found. And he DID when his Twitter account read “@Bullets Over Broadway tonight”. The mission was on.

It was awful weather. It turned out to be the wettest day on record. So when I spoke with Ria on the phone I asked her if it was worth it, being that she had to take a train into the city and we'd be soaking wet. She responded with a definite yes! Ria went on to say that she just wanted to see Michael. She had not been able to make trips to England in the past two years and missed just seeing him. She said that she had nothing to say to him since she always went mute when she saw him back in England so she would be happy just to get a glimpse of him. So it was settled - she went off to catch her train from Rhinebeck, NY which is two hours north of New York City.

I met Ria at Penn Station in midtown after work and we had some time to kill before the

appointment hour but the weather was not cooperating for any outside activities so we decided to go to Junior's. If anyone knows of Junior's Restaurant you know that they are world famous for their cheesecakes, although I praise anything you select from that menu. They also have a bartender who makes a great Mai Tai (don't know what goes into a Mai Tai but it is a great fruity mixed drink with a bit of rum). Junior's is located right on Shubert Alley and right around the corner from the theater where Michael had said he would be coming to so it was the perfect place. Of course we had cheesecake... and a Mai Tai each! Half way through mine, I was done but Ria said that the drink tasted wonderful and drank her entire drink plus half of mine that I did not want. I had never seen Ria drink so quickly but it was okay. No one was driving anywhere so what could it hurt?

We finished our treats and walked over to the theater in a downpour. Ana and Cira met us and we started our sentry watch. It was getting close to the start of the show and no Michael. I looked at Ria and basically told her that I didn't think that it was going to happen. But it didn't phase her. She said that there was still time. And she was right. Coming down the street holding his umbrella and enjoying his walk in the rain was none other than Mr Michael Ball himself!

We were greeted with a genuine smile and a great big “Hello there!” And mission was accomplished. Michael introduced us to Jonathan Church, Artistic Director for the Chichester Festival Theatre and then started filling us in on what he had been doing including talking about his role as Tubby in the upcoming “That Day We Sang” musical he had filmed. He looked surprised when we told him we knew all about it. And then he said that we probably would not get to see it because it was being shown on British TV. At that point I had to remind him of the fans he has. I told him that his home based fans in England *always* make sure the worldwide fans get a glimpse of all that he does back home. This is why we knew all about the projects he was working on.

I then turned to talk with Jonathan about the productions I had seen at Chichester besides *Sweeney Todd*, and then, I looked at Ria. She was talking to Michael and commenting on how great he was looking and how great the beard looked on him. This from the woman who could not mutter a syllable in front of Michael in the past! I just had to smirk. She was definitely having her Michael moment!

Michael then asked if we wanted a picture and we accepted the offer quite eagerly.

Thanks to the wonder of modern smart phones, we were able to capture the moment. It was then time for Michael to enter the theater and we said our goodbyes.

As we started walking away from the theater we had forgotten just how bad it was raining. But for us, we had just experienced a ray of sunshine in the midst of it all. As we walked away, I asked Ria what had happened? Where did she find her voice to speak with Michael so freely? Her answer?

“I guess it was the Mai Tai. Now I know what I have to do next time I see him.”

A few weeks went by and the four of us finally got together during the last weekend in May to have our mini-MBFC meet up in Rhinebeck, NY. Ria started talking about our encounter with Michael and how she still could not believe that she actually talked with him and again gave the credit for her ability to speak to the “liquid courage” called the Mai Tai. That was the perfect segue to a little present we had brought her.

Ria now has a flask and Mai Tai mix! (Just add the rum) Next time she hears of Michael coming her way, she will be ready!



MICHAEL ON BBC RADIO 2

Michael has sat in for Ken Bruce on his BBC Radio 2 Show and will be doing so again for the week commencing Monday 4 August. Here are some of the photos that Radio 2 put on their Facebook page, showing Michael having fun with Vanessa Feltz, pictured with Paul Carrack for 'Tracks Of My Years', together with a couple that we were lucky enough to have taken when we visited the studio.





Meeting Michael At The Cork Stage Door

by Maureen

I'd like to thank everyone who looked after me in Cork after poor Gill was suffering so much with sciatica she couldn't make it on to the plane! I was at the stage door when Michael arrived on Sunday and took this photo when he was telling Joan and her friends that he'd been "stalking" them.

Opposite, he is peering into the gift bag to see what Jen Garner had just given him. He was more than happy to model his new "Guinness" baseball cap which was the present in question.





BBC Radio 2's Book Club

Michael was a guest on BBC Radio 2's Book Club to give a review of 'Elizabeth Is Missing' by Emma Healey. The story is told by Maude who is Elizabeth's best friend. She can't remember if she's seen her recently as she is suffering from dementia and this what Michael said:

"It's her debut novel and it's not a book that I thought would be instantly appealing to me. It's an extraordinary book. There's

a sort of sub-title on the cover that says, 'How do you solve the mystery when you can't remember the clues?'"

"I found it very disconcerting and quite a bit upsetting as you see this woman struggle with losing her memory and getting past and present mixed up. It's got an interesting twist at the end, but you can't come out of the book thinking, oh

that was great, because it's too moving, too upsetting. I don't know how Emma was able to research this book but she's done a remarkable job. I'm probably better from the experience of having read it. It's not a subject I would have been drawn to. I guess that's what the Radio 2 Book Club is about. To bring to our attention things we wouldn't have normally known existed."



CORK – MAY 2014 & 'THE STALKER'

By Joan Johnson



For the weekend 10th & 11th May, about 18 fans travelled to Cork to see Michael singing with the Cork Youth Orchestra, at Cork City Hall, on that Saturday and Sunday evening. Michael last sang with the orchestra for two lovely Christmas concerts, on 8th & 9th December 2012, and at that stage he said he'd love to be invited back. The orchestra is made up of 135 boys and girls between the ages of 13 to 18. They are all very talented and well 'turned out' – black dresses for the girls, and black shirts and trousers for the boys.

The first night's concert was delayed by some 30 minutes due to a member of the audience being taken ill. We did wonder if the concert would be cut short, but thankfully it wasn't.

All the fans were in the front two rows for both performances, so that made a lovely atmosphere for us.

The concerts were based on 'The Movies'. Here is the set list:

Act 1

'Pirates of the Caribbean' theme
(CYO)

'Band of Brothers' theme
(CYO & Choir)

My Heart Will Go On
(MB, CYO)

Circle of Life
(MB, CYO, Choir)

Love on the Rocks
(MB, CYO)

Hush A-Bye Mountain
(MB, CYO)

The Way We Were
(MB, CYO, Choir)

The Rose / The Way We Were (reprise)
(MB, CYO, Choir)

Act 2

'Superman' theme
(CYO)

'ET' theme
(CYO)

As If We Never Said Goodbye
(MB, CYO)

With One Look
(MB, CYO)

'Les Miserables' introduction
Empty Chairs at Empty Tables
(MB, CYO)

Do You Hear the People Sing
(MB, CYO, Choir)

Don't Stop Believing
(MB, CYO, Choir)

Avenues & Alleyways
(MB, CYO, Choir)

You Can't Stop the Beat
(MB, CYO, Choir)

Love Changes Everything
(MB, CYO)

Although Michael did not sing any new songs, it was lovely to hear some of the oldies again. I particularly loved hearing 'Hush A-Bye Mountain', 'The Rose', 'The Way We Were' and 'With One Look'... all beautiful songs, and Michael sang them in his own inimitable style. We all felt that Michael enjoyed himself at these concerts working with the young musicians, who put everything into their performances on both nights. The audiences were very appreciative at the end each evening,

We were lucky enough to see Michael at the stage door before and after both concerts. In the main he spoke to us as a group, just general chit-chat about the orchestra, the weather, the town of Cork, the amazing hospitality of the people of Cork... and of course Murphy's! Michael seemed happy to chat to us all, and answered any questions in his normal fun way!

There was one funny little moment at the stage door on Sunday afternoon. Three of us had gone to the St Fin Barre's Cathedral in the morning. I particularly like looking at stained glass windows, especially when the sun is shining through them. So we had a look around the Cathedral and then took a slow relaxing walk back into town to wander through the shopping area. Late afternoon we went to the stage door to see Michael arrive. When he got there he asked, with a cheeky grin "Who has been to the Cathedral this morning?" The three of us said we'd gone, and he replied, "I know..." and then said 'And how do I know?' We were all looking at him quizzically and he continued to say "You came out, walked down the road, and then crossed the river bridge..." We asked how he knew, and in a very mischievous way, he replied "I was behind you!" Before we/he had time to say anything else

somebody asked him another question and the moment was gone. So we have no idea how far behind us Michael was, we certainly didn't get the feeling we were being followed. So maybe in future we need to walk backwards to see if Michael is stalking us!

We all had a lovely time in Cork doing the touristy things in the morning and early afternoon and then seeing Michael in two wonderful concerts in the evening. As always Michael's voice was amazing, it was so good to hear him sing again. It was also nice to meet up with 'Michael friends'.

Thank you Michael for two great concerts and for the time you generously spent with us at the stage door. We all appreciated it and look forward to the next Cork experience... and being stalked!



THE VOICE OF SOHO

Michael Ball has praised a 20-year-old student after she was crowned the “Voice of Soho” in a talent show.

Olivia McShane won £5,000 in the inaugural Archer Street’s Got Talent competition, having impressed judges with her rendition of Kelly Clarkson’s Up To The Mountain.

West End star Ball said: “If she works hard and hones her craft she has got a chance of doing really well. She has something really interesting and quirky about her, a beautiful voice and she has got class. She has a really bright future.”

Miss McShane, from Chiswick, is a media student at Goldsmiths University. She plans to use the prize to buy a mandolin to add to her collection of instruments.

She said: “I’m so stunned. It is so flattering, especially to hear praise from someone like Michael Ball who is a true musician. That’s why I appreciate this competition because the judges are



respected in their crafts. It means a lot.

“I think I’ll use the money to have an amazing summer and I want a new mandolin. I also play the violin, guitar and harmonica.”

The talent competition was organised by cocktail bar Archer Street in Soho,

where many of the bar staff are also performers.

Sixty-four contestants battled it out over eight weeks to make it to the final, judged by Ball, fellow West End star Brenda Edwards, X Factor creative director Tim Gething and BBC producer Mike Hanson.

ONE NIGHT ONLY!

A Night of
VARIETY

Celebrating 100 years
of the Alhambra Theatre

★ ★ ★ **STAR NAMES TO BE ANNOUNCED!** ★ ★ ★

Michael will headline a fabulous one night event in celebration of 100 years of The Alhambra Theatre!

The Alhambra Theatre opened its doors for the very first time to the general public with a Variety show which ran for a week in March 1914.

The show included a multitude of acts and also a Revue called A Year in the Hour. Performers included stars of pantomime, music hall, musical comedy, stand-up comedians, singers and acrobats.

Ticket prices

- Stalls £39.50, £42.50, £45
- Dress Circle £42.50, £45
- Upper Circle £27.50, £29.50
- Lounges (seat 6) £270

PREMIUM SEATS are available at £100 in Stalls / Dress Circle - limited availability - call Box Office for further information.

www.bradford-theatres.co.uk/event/variety100th

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: MBFC22



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!

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 opposite 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!



PENPALS

NORA GILMOUR
141 LEOPOLD ROAD, KENSINGTON, LIVERPOOL, L7 8SS

Nora says it would be good to meet other member's for company when going to Michael's concerts, so she would love to hear from anyone.

