

ON THE BALL

Issue 80



Hi Everyone

Here we are with the winter 2021 edition of On The Ball and it's been another interesting few months.

It was good that Hairspray managed to battle through the Covid restrictions and it was such a joyous show to keep us going through the summer. It would have been nice if it could have gone on a bit longer, but Michael and the Coliseum had other commitments to fulfil.

We are sitting here listening to Michael's Christmas album which will be followed by Michael and Alfie's Christmas album, and we are looking forward to seeing the two of them performing in London at the O2 next week. There are some tour reports in this edition and all we can see is it's been a fantastic show with so much energy and love emanating from the stage every night.

Looking back at the last On The Ball we can see that Michael was teasing us about a solo tour, and once again he's doing the same! A nice spring tour would be brilliant, and it would help us to celebrate the fan club's 30th Anniversary in style, so we will bring confirmed news of dates as soon as we can. In the meantime, some of you will be looking forward to seeing Michael perform at one of the Warner Leisure weekend shows and we hope to have some reports from these in the next issue.

As always, make sure you are signed up for our regular News Updates to receive information straight to your In box. Here's the link:

www.mbfc.uk/newsletter-signup

Our lively Facebook group is another way to keep up to date with Michael news. Go to www.facebook.com/groups/michaelballfanclub/

Finally, we wish all of you a happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas season. Many thanks go to our team for their help throughout 2021, especially James for his wonderful work with On The Ball and Chris for his website work. Thanks as always also go to Michael and his team at Live Nation for their support this year.

Love

Maureen and Gill

Compiled and designed by James Gaden - www.halo-graphic.com. Email: james@halo-graphic.com

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Dear Everyone,
Well my lovelies, this letter is being written just before the concert tonight in Aberdeen, exactly halfway through the tour and I can't begin to tell you how much I've enjoyed it so far. It's been amazing.

The joy of seeing you all again and visiting the parts of the country we haven't been able to see for so long feels like the most special of privileges and at this time of the year is such a huge blessing. Thank you so much for coming to see us, and if you haven't been able to see the show I hope it won't be too long before we get the chance to be together.

From all the reactions to the shows in the Arena's and in the social media forums I think Alfie and I have been able to put on a show that has really worked for everyone and that has left people

feeling positive, happy and full of Christmas spirit which is exactly what we hoped for and the joy of getting to sing live again (not in a truck!!) is bloody wonderful and the best present we could have asked for.

So talking of singing live I'm more than excited to be able to tell you that a solo tour is now being planned for the spring of next year and I can't wait. I have wanted the chance to perform some of the songs from the "More Than One" album so much and it looks like that is going to happen. I want it to be a much smaller, intimate evening this time, much more up close and personal, and I hope you can come and see it. It would mean so much to me.

Lots of other plans for next year will be shared very soon but if the last 2 years has taught us

anything, it's that we have to be adaptable and ready to change things quickly and not let it get us down. It's hard though I know. So many of us, multiple times, have planned something, organized it, got excited about it, only to have it cancelled or compromised at the last minute — it's hard to deal with sometimes but we do and I guess there's no point worrying about it. This Too Shall Pass.....

So whatever gets thrown at us over the next year we will deal with, learn from it, grow because of it and make the most of it. That is what we do and we have all learned that together we are stronger.

I'm sending you the biggest of Christmas hugs, my sincerest of thank you's for always being there for me and each other and all of my love.

Take care, be kind and see you soon I hope.

God Bless

Phil

HAIRSPRAY AT LAST!

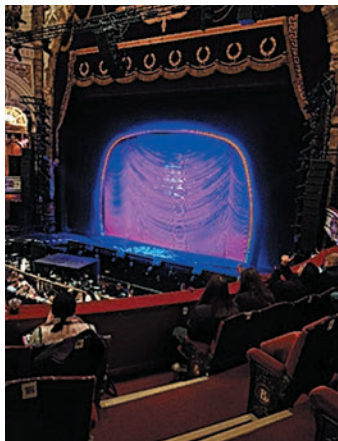
by Helen Easton



At long last, after all the delays due to Covid 19, we got to see *Hairspray*. First it should have been on April the 29th 2020 for my sister's 50th Birthday and then back in April 29th 2021 and then changed back to September the 1st! We are now finally here with our friend Darren and really

looking forward to the show. First of all we went for a meal at Pizza Express in St Martins Lane just down the road from the Coliseum Theatre which was lovely. Then we walked down to the road and said "Yes, we're here at the Coliseum at last to see *Hairspray*!" We were hoping that Michael, Les Dennis and the other two cast people we really wanted to see would be performing, which they were.

It was great to see the theatre full and audiences back again after such a lengthy absence! We are really glad to be back to the theatre again after a long time away, we have really missed the West End and local theatres too.



We got to our seats and had a really good view as you can see from the photos. *Hairspray* was just fantastic, a show that we really needed at this time. It was wonderful to see Michael playing Edna again after seeing him back in 2007 – we can't believe it was long ago! Les Dennis as Wilbur Turnblad Edna's husband was great and yes, Les Dennis is the best kisser on stage with Michael! Also, Rita Simons as Velma Von Tussle, Marisha Wallace as Motormouth Maybelle, and Lizzie Bea as Tracy Turnblad were all fantastic. That goes for all the rest of the cast too, thank you to them. Also to those that work in front of the theatre and behind the show that put it on as well.





My daughter Laura and I had a fantastic time celebrating my 60th birthday seeing *Hairspray* - Michael, Les, Rita, Marisha and all the cast were amazing and the memories will stay with us forever!

Julie Ann Sails



NADINE JOHNSON



One of Michael's biggest fans, Nadine Johnson, unexpectedly but peacefully passed away on 5th November 2021 aged 43. She had been a fan of Michael's for most of her life. Many of you will remember Nadine from seeing her and talking to her at many of Michael's concerts over the past years. Nadine had a very rare bone condition and scoliosis and faced many challenges throughout her life but she was a brave soul who never complained about the difficulties she encountered over the years. She was always accompanied by "Auntie Joan" Johnson, and you just had to follow the laughter to know where Nadine was! She will be greatly missed by all of us.



Our first trip into London for 18 months after lockdown. We were on our way to see the *Les Mis* Staged Concert and thought we'd drop by Wogan House. Michael, as always, didn't disappoint and suggested a socially distanced photo with myself and my granddaughter, Keira.

Photo taken by my daughter, Laura.

Sheila Cotton

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

by Anne Wernham

I am just a little late to the party, I know, but reading the comments on the Facebook Fan Club page, as I do most days, it seems that I am not alone! I have always been “aware” of Michael Ball since ‘Love Changes Everything’, but somehow, mysteriously, I have missed so much! How did this amazing, talented man escape my notice all of this time?

As I recall he entered my life about two years ago when I watched a short program on ITV featuring a few songs sung by Michael and Alfie. I was hooked and I said to my husband at the time that, although they were both fantastic, Michael’s voice was particularly to my taste. I might add that as my husband, Paul, has been force fed (!) Michael’s DVDs, he is so impressed with his talents that he might even now call himself a fan! Particularly when he sees Michael sing ‘Gethsemane’ he can’t stop himself from clapping and saying “Brilliant!” He is being dragged along to the Arena concert in December anyway!

I think most fans are avid listeners of Michael’s radio show and would not miss it at some time in the week on BBC Sounds if we are unable to listen on Sunday when broadcast. It is a highlight of our week hearing Michael’s cheery voice, the lovely long and interesting interviews, ‘On The Ball’ quiz (so unique and funny!) the Family Album feature, heart lifting and sometimes poignant. Personally, I even look forward to Michael’s chat with the lovely Orna Merchant, with unintentional laughs at times!

I was delighted yesterday (12th September) when Michael chose my suggestion for a ‘Boogie With Ball’ song, namely ‘Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy’. I so enjoyed seeing Michael and his guest singers do this song on a concert DVD I knew it would be a good one for this spot on his radio show. Michael said on Twitter “So today, by popular request” – I actually think he wanted to say “This woman keeps ***** nagging me to do this!” Thank you so much Michael and Ste! (I am feeling almost brave and strong enough to be

tempted to apply for ‘On The Ball’!)

I am now on a mission to own all the DVDs and CDs that I can find but am sad that I will never be able to see all the fantastic musicals I have missed over the years. Thankfully, there are many treasures on YouTube to discover and fill in some of the gaps. I never cease to be amazed at the endless, perfect talents of this lovely man and how everything he attempts he achieves to perfection.



To date I have managed to get hold of eight DVDs of Michael’s concerts, plus one with Alfie and the 2019 *Les Misérables* with Michael as Javert and Alfie as Jean Val Jean. (I also have four CD’s and one tape!)

There are so many highlights in these, too many to mention but the top ones that stand out for me, the unplugged extra on *The Best of Michael Ball Live* is just delicious! The *Past and Present* tour at the Albert Hall with Adrian Hansel, Ben, Louise, Louise(!) and Emma is amazing, with the perfectly choreographed flow of all their songs (and those harmonies, wow!) All of these concert DVDs take my breath away with their perfectly executed songs and routines. Even songs that were once just good songs to me are just magic when Michael adds his touch to them, in my humble opinion, better than the

original version by far, who has heard his ‘Misty’? WOW! (The extras are funny and entertaining too, and Michael’s telling of the Savoy incident is hilarious!)

I also have a DVD of *The Making Of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* which just shows me how much I have missed in never having seen any of Michael’s musicals. He claims to not be a natural dancer but this musical in particular just shows how perfectly he masters anything he attempts.

Another great advantage in “discovering” Michael is that I have re-joined Twitter and Facebook and have interacted with so many lovely people from widespread parts of the world that are avid fans too. Including some that “know” Michael in various ways. It has been particularly exciting to chat frequently with a lovely lady from the U.S. that actually worked with Michael many years ago (I’m so jealous!) in New York. Her name is Cindy Steffens Kubala, and she remembers her time working and socialising with him with great fondness. Cindy was the Costume Director for New York City Opera and her team made Michael’s costume for his appearance in *Patience* in New York (and how fabulous is that!) She tells me how lucky she was to fly over to the UK to measure him and discuss his costume with him, also to be invited to see a concert he was performing at that



time. Cindy immediately became a fan and still is to this day, both of the performer and the lovely, kind man that he is, (I think we all have discovered that he is a lovely kind soul!) and remembers fondly of sitting and chatting with him whenever he was having a break at the theatre in New York.

Other lovely fans that are now Facebook and Twitter friends are from South Africa, Germany, U.S. and many in the U.K. You all know who you are!

Through this past awful 18 months Michael has continued to entertain us and keep in touch with video messages, at the same time as writing some beautiful songs and making a lovely CD which shot to number 2 in the charts. Meanwhile, aiding Captain Sir Tom with his fund raising for the NHS charities by raising his profile and producing a CD with him in record time that reached No. 1 in the charts. Somehow he also found time to make a Christmas album with Alfie reaching No. 1 in the album charts. As if all of these achievements weren't enough for one man Michael was busy making a fantastic TV program about his beloved Wales. How amazing was this program, I think we all loved the mixture of humour, pathos, discovery of the beauty and diversity of Wales all crowned with a lovely song accompanied by a Welsh choir (how beautiful were these). Michael's lovely personality shone through every program. Who would have thought that he would make the best travel program ever!

We are all hoping that he will have

Lizzie, Marisha, Michael, Les and all the other talented people involved.

Like many others, I'm so looking forward to seeing Michael and Alfie on their Arena tour and will be first in line for Michael's next solo tour.

Thank you, Michael, for entertaining us all so fantastically and in all these ways, also for bringing us all together! You have definitely helped us all to get through the last 18 months with all these achievements, your lovely voice, your wonderful sense of humour, your cheery, positive attitude and your kind words. Please keep entertaining us in any way you can.

We also appreciate you writing a lovely message to us in the fan publication, and especially in your own hand.

God bless you, Michael. We bloody love you, too!



BLOSSOM'S FIRST MICHAEL BALL SHOW

Way back in Issue 68, we introduced the Fan Club members to Blossom Anna Liberty Lunt, whose parents Steve and Emma, both Fan Club members, had met at one of Michael's concerts on the 25th Anniversary tour.

Blossom was first introduced to Michael at the stage door during the *Mack & Mabel* shows, but now had chance to properly take one in as she was old enough to appreciate it. Dad Steve explains:



Blossom was excited to attend her very first Michael Ball show, and her very first West End show at the age of 5, when we went to see *Hairspray*.

She had a great time, although she did remark in the interval that Michael Ball must be off sick as he's not in the show!

After the show her verdict was the show was so good she thought it was the best thing she's ever seen and so much better than *Treasure Island* (that we had seen the previous week in Whitley Bay!) and she was enjoying it so much she thought she was going to cry with happiness at the end!

I think that qualifies as a 5 star rave review and she got to meet Maureen and Gill for the first time and had a lovely time with them while I slipped off to the bar to get drinks!





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Photo: Julie Vidler

AUGUST 2022

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DECEMBER 2022

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AN AMAZING CONNECTION!

by Angela Murray

After signing up to the Michael Ball Fan Club, which I love as I'm a big fan, I began to order *On The Ball* magazine. After a couple of issues I saw a lady had written inviting other fans to write to her on the penfriend page. I noticed she lived in



London Colney which is my birthplace, so I decided to write to her. To my lovely surprise, she lived not far from where I grew up and her Dad was my Dad's best friend! We found we both have photos of them in their day, so now we are good friends. We are going to meet up soon so thanks to the Fan Club and to James for putting together *On The Ball* which we both look forward to receiving!



It's not been easy to bump into Michael for the past few months thanks to Covid-19 and the various precautions and restrictions that go along with it. Fortunately things do seem to be getting better and in the meantime, lots of fans have great memories to share.

Above is a photo sent in by Shirley Mullins, who says it was taken by the stage door at Her Majesty's Theatre, with Shirley proudly stating "I have been following Michael for 34 years and I am still excited to be seeing him in Brighton 2nd December. Oh, and *Hairspray* was fabulous!"

On the right is Elaine Biller, who had this lovely photo taken at the stage door of the Coliseum when Michael was performing in the *Chess* revival. Even better for Elaine was she got her photo with Michael while wearing her *Les Misérables* shoes!



A (NOT SO) LITTLE SOUVENIR!

by Sue Rogers



Our first visit to *Hairspray* (myself, my daughter Leanne and Granddaughter Isla) was 14th August. It was Isla's first visit to a musical in the West End, we've taken her to a couple of regional shows but this was West End, *Hairspray* and Michael, she was so excited. Arriving in London we headed to the The Coliseum. Isla (and us!) were thrilled to see the *Hairspray* banners and the fact that we were about to see the show that we'd been talking about for so long, as with everyone these tickets had been bought, cancelled, re-arranged so many times!!

A trip to The Theatre Café first for coffee & cake...a must...! Isla was taking it all in and marvelling at all the theatre memorabilia in there. It was soon time for our pre booked meal in the Coliseum restaurant, it was delicious too and only added to the excitement of seeing the show. Show time arrived and although I've seen it many times before this was different and quite emotional. With the theatres being dark for so long suddenly they were ablaze with lights, live music, dancing and singing and we were back amongst audiences enjoying what was before us...a feeling I'll always remember and never take going to the theatre for granted again!



As Michael entered the stage in his 'housecoat & scuppies' I took a look at Isla, she was beaming! All too soon it ended and what a reaction from the audience, theatre was back and we were loving it.

Our next visit, just Leanne & I, was the last night of *Hairspray*. After checking in at the hotel opposite The Coliseum we did a quick



ticket check to make sure that there were no last minute tickets available for the matinée, sadly not, we headed back into The Theatre Café for lunch. We had a lovely time eating, listening to the great music and enjoying our first cocktail of our couple of days away!

Once again we'd booked the Coliseum restaurant for dinner, so back to the hotel, changed, and headed to the theatre. Stalls seats this time, 'Good Morning Baltimore' rang out and we were off...so much energy from the cast. A perk of eating at The Coliseum is that you can head back to your table at the interval for dessert!

Once again, all to soon we were watching 'You Can't Stop The Beat' and the end of the show. The audiences applause seemed to go on an on. Michael stepped forward and tried to speak...eventually he was able to and said "There was a time we wondered if we'd ever hear that (applause) again!" Many of the cast were teary and just drinking in the atmosphere, for some it was their West End debut.

The next day we'd booked to see the matinée of *The Jersey Boys*, another favourite of ours. It was raining and we were taking our bags to be checked to leave at the hotel. Leanne popped out to see if we needed umbrellas and said that she'd noticed the cherry pickers were at the Coliseum taking down the *Hairspray* banners. We both remarked how quick it was. We headed out to catch breakfast at Cafe Concerto as its opposite the Trafalgar Theatre and *The Jersey Boys*. Just as we did I noticed that they were taking down Michael / Edna's banner. I stopped to take a photo, as you do! The guy in the basket taking it down saw me and said "Am I on camera?" and laughed. Leanne said "What do you do with them?" He said "Why, do you want it?" Do I want it? Yes please!!!



I crossed the road and he was bringing it down in the basket. He rolled it up for me and said "This'll be on eBay tomorrow, who is it anyway?" I put him straight on a few things...no it won't be on eBay and it's Michael Ball! He laughed and said "do you want the others they're in the van?"... no, just Michael please. If there was ever a case of right time, right place, this was it for me. I was thrilled!

I checked it in with my suitcase and headed off for breakfast. I think the smile on my face took awhile to disappear. *The Jersey Boys* was brilliant as usual and so ended our *Hairspray* experience, both very special in more ways than one. Experiencing my Granddaughter's first West End, the return of trips to London for us, theatre back and a little souvenir. What will I do with it? I don't know! I've thought of hanging it in my garden by my patio table, it'll add to summer BBQ's! I just treasure the fact that I have it, it's been in the West End, hanging from a beautiful theatre with my favourite star... so all good!



THE BEST YEAR OF MY LIFE!

by Brenda Falcus

I made it back to London see the final two shows of *Hairspray* with my dear friends Michael and Gail Watt and the shows were just as fantastic as we expected, we were lucky enough to see the man himself before the first show as he was arriving. It was the first time I had seen him in the flesh and it was quite a thrill. We met Val Self again and made a few new friends. After the final show we waited in the road and got to see quite a few members of the cast. Then a few of us waited at the front of the theatre, hoping to get a glimpse of Michael leaving after the party. One by one they gave up and left as it was quite chilly but we hung in there and it really paid off. Eventually Michael came out and we got a hug and a photo and a chat. When I said I would see him on the cruise he turned back, reached out and squeezed my hand. What can I say... my life is complete! Or I thought it was...



The cruise was only two weeks later and it would be the first time I got to hear Michael sing live just as Michael, not Edna, and I couldn't wait. I was originally going alone on the cruise but fate stepped in and Michael's version of the song 'We've Got Tonight' played a major role in that. I met up with a childhood friend whom I had only seen twice in fifty years and love hit us like a meteor! We had both given up hope of ever finding such happiness as we are no spring chickens! Yet here we were going to see the man that helped us on our way, so that made it even more special.

We met up with Val Tompsett for the first time on the cruise, another MBFC lady, and such great fun, and the three of us very luckily managed to get tickets for both shows. There we were standing second in the queue beside ourselves with excitement, the doors opened and we ran as fast as possible to get the front centre seats. The curtain opened and there he was. Oh my God, he was magnificent, that smile

could melt an iceberg, his voice – nothing in this world can compare to hearing him live. I was mesmerised. He sang, he chatted and being so close he looked straight at us and I swear my heart stopped. When he did his hip gyration we were standing up directly in front of him and couldn't have been closer... I had better not say any more about that!!

He had a job at times trying to stand, as the sea was a tad rough that night, but he made a joke of it in pure Michael fashion. The show was everything and more than I ever thought possible. As soon as it was over we hastily left and got straight back in the queue for the second performance. I wore my *Hairspray* mask for both shows and when Michael came back on he did a double take and then pointed and smiled... does life get any better than this? Over two hours of listening and being so close to Michael Ball is the stuff of all of our dreams and it happened, it really happened for me. What is really good is that the fantastic new man in my life just accepted it all – I did have to tell him that I wouldn't swap him for Michael... but I am not sure he believed me!

A few days after arriving home I snapped a tendon in my knee and have been pretty immobile and in a lot of pain since, but I had some wonderful memories to look back on. On the 15th December we will be seeing the Ball and Boe show and I have a meet and greet, a Christmas present to myself. I am just praying that my knee mends enough to be able to sit in a seat for that long but luck has been with me this year so I am hopeful. Lets face it if I have to sit in agony to be at that show, I certainly will!



On Saturday 4th September I finally got to see Michael live on the West End stage, to say I was excited was an understatement - I had waited months for this after it being rescheduled from April. It is true what everyone said, *Hairspray* is definitely a feel good show that leaves you feeling uplifted for days after.

Michael appeared and I couldn't stop smiling, (not that you could see it under the mask), I laughed and even felt a tear in my eye when 'I Know Where I've Been' was sung. The relationship between Michael and Les Dennis was great, I honestly hadn't laughed that much in ages when they did their duet.

Having seen Michael on the stage made me wish I could have seen him in the past in the other roles he has played. Anyway, I enjoyed it so much that three weeks later I was back again for a second go - just with better seats this time, (in the stalls about five rows back), so I got an even better look at Michael in full flow. I now can't wait till December to see him with Alfie at the O2!

Sarah Cooper
Photos by Julie Vidler



THE FINAL PERFORMANCE OF HAIRSPRAY



Gill Riddle sent in these images from the final performance of *Hairspray*. Gill is also pictured far right with her good friends Janice Lazarus and Anne Smith, wearing their *Hairspray* masks, made by Marshall Masks Interiors. Gill also kindly sent in a recent photo of Michael at Wogan House after his radio show.



BALL AND BOE BLAST INTO BOURNEMOUTH!

by Mark Witchell. Live photos by Julie Vidler.



After the turbulent last 18 months it was great to be back at a Michael Ball and Alfie Boe concert. The last arena concert I went to was at the O2 Arena on 7th March 2020, just before the first UK lockdown.

This was the fourth stop on the Ball and Boe 2021 arena tour and their fourth appearance together at the Bournemouth International Centre. What an evening it was! The concert was full of Michael and Alfie's greatest hits, finishing with a huge Christmas party to send everyone off with the perfect festive mood! Megan McKenna was an amazing support act and I was so impressed with the versatility of her voice.

The concert started off with a medley of some of Michael and Alfie's appearances over the last

five years. John Tonks' famous drum beat then heralded the arrival of Michael and Alfie who bounded on to the stage to sing the Motown classic 'Dancing In The Streets' made famous by Martha and The Vandellas. Next came the Status Quo classic 'Rockin' All Over The World' followed by 'The Greatest Show' and we were most definitely in the party mood.

'You'll be Back' from *Hamilton* is always a firm favourite in the set list. Michael and Alfie then paid tribute to the recent passing of Stephen Sondheim with a heartfelt rendition of 'Not While I'm Around' from *Sweeney Todd*. During this song all the musicals that Stephen Sondheim had written were displayed on the large video screen in a truly emotional tribute.



'The Rose' was next followed by 'Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again' from *Phantom Of The Opera*. 'A Thousand Years' and 'Army' were wonderful additions to the set list before the orchestra struck up to the recognisable chords from *Les Misérables*. Michael's rendition of 'Stars' and Alfie's version of 'Bring Him Home' resulted in hugely deserved standing ovations before a rousing version of 'One Day More'.

Next came 'Circle of Life' and 'He Lives in You' from *The Lion King*. 'You're the Voice' followed before Michael persuaded Alfie to join with him to sing 'Love Changes Everything' once again. Michael and Alfie



SET LIST

Dancing In The Streets

Rockin' All Over The World

The Greatest Show
(From *The Greatest Showman*)

You'll Be Back
(From *Hamilton*)

Not While I'm Around
(From *Sweeney Todd*)

The Rose
(From *The Rose*)

Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again
(From *Phantom Of The Opera*)

A Thousand Years
(From *The Twilight Saga*)

Army

Stars
(From *Les Misérables*- Michael)

Bring Him Home
(From *Les Misérables*- Alfie)

One Day More
(From *Les Misérables*)

Circle Of Life
(From *The Lion King*)

He Lives In You
(From *The Lion King*)

You're The Voice

Love Changes Everything
(From *Aspects Of Love*)

Queen Medley:
It's A Kind Of Magic
Radio Ga Ga
We Will Rock You
We Are The Champions

Blues Brothers Medley:
Gimme Some Lovin'
Shake Your Tail Feather,
Soul Man
Think (Megan McKenna)
Everybody Needs Somebody To Love

It's Beginning To Look A Lot
Like Christmas

The Spirit Of Christmas

Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)

All I Want For Christmas Is You
(Megan McKenna)

Merry Christmas Everyone

Here It Is Merry Christmas

I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday

Note: In Birmingham Michael and Alfie sang 'I'll Be Home For Christmas'. They were also joined by Roy Wood for 'I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday'.



decided to bring back the hugely popular Queen medley from the 2017 tour which included 'It's A Kind Of Magic', 'Radio Ga Ga', 'We Will Rock You' and 'We Are The Champions'. Michael and Alfie then brought something new to the concert - a Blue Brothers Medley! This included 'Gimme Some Lovin'', 'Shake Your Tail Feather', 'Soul Man', 'Think' (sung amazingly well by Megan McKenna) and ending with 'Everybody Needs Somebody to Love'.

It was time to quieten things down for the Christmas section of the show. Michael and

Alfie started their final set with 'It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas' and the Ray Charles classic 'The Spirit Of Christmas'.

Then it was time to party and what better way to kick it off than with 'Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)' and Megan McKenna singing 'All I Want for Christmas Is You'. Next came the Shakin' Stevens classic 'Merry Christmas Everyone'. The concert finished with Slade's 'Merry Christmas everybody' and Wizzard's 'I Wish It Could Be Christmas Everyday'. Wow what a way to finish a hugely epic evening with a Christmas party!



This arena tour has to be one of Michael and Alfie's best yet and I can't wait to relive it all again at the O2 and for the last night of the tour in Cardiff. Merry Christmas everyone and have a happy and safe New Year. As Michael says: "Be kind!"





The past few years have been hard for us all, and we've all had a lot to deal with that none of us could foresee happening. In March 2020 I was able to see Michael and Alfie in concert in Birmingham. It was my mom's 90th birthday present as she loved going to shows and loved Michael. Little did I know that that would be the last show I would go to with her, as she sadly passed away suddenly in July 2020. Then this year I had to go into hospital for an operation as cancer had been diagnosed. I have been very positive throughout and Michael's music and radio shows have certainly helped me through, being a great source of comfort and ideal medicine. Also the Fan Club has been a great help too, so much kindness when I've posted anything. I'm having chemo at moment and have three to go, then radiation therapy as this is as an extra kind of insurance policy. Michael gave me a shout out on the radio after some friends had sent in a message. Oh that made my day and gave me great support! Then after few anxious weeks not knowing if I would be able to see the show in Birmingham on 29th November, I was well enough to go and my cousin Pat came with me. It was a great night and I just forgot everything and lost myself in the night's entertainment. The best medicine ever, I even managed to take a few photos! It was a wonderful night, great songs and a night of new treasured memories to keep and take with me for the rest of my treatment. I've also a sneaky feeling too that my mom was

looking down and enjoying the show too. If I've attached photos they are of my mom last year at concert and Michael on stage, others are from this years concert.

Diane Anslow



PENPALS

The fans below would love to hear from other fans of Michael:

PAT ALEXANDER

email: alexanderpatricia20@yahoo.com

LINDA STROUDE

email: lindastroude4@gmail.com

KATHRYN HORNER

Interested to know if anyone wants to meet up once a month in Wigan?

kathrynhorner47@gmail.com

THE MICHAEL BALL FAN CLUB ONLINE

www.mbfanclub.co.uk

The Michael Ball Fan Club is now completely free to join – simply visit the website address above and register your email address and you will receive notifications every time there is some Michael Ball news to report. There is also a members area where you can download past issues of On The Ball and access Michael's past Infoline messages.

The password to access it is: **MBFC28**



