

ON THE BALL

Issue 88



Hi Everyone

So here we are at the end of 2025, which has been another very busy year. Michael's wonderful letter will remind you of everything that has happened and what's to look forward to next year. He will bring tears to your eyes when he talks about losing his dear Mum Ruth. We were lucky enough to have met her quite a few times over the years and she was such a sweetheart. Here they are together last year celebrating her 90th Birthday.



There is a lot to look forward to next year, with the release of Michael's album "Glow" and the tour at the end of the summer - it's nice to know there is plenty on the horizon and we hope to see some of you along the way.

It's time to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and to thank all of you who have contributed to this issue. We also send thanks and many congratulations to our James who married the lovely Sara in October. May you have a long and happy life together.

Love

Maureen and Gill



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

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Dearest Everyone,
Well my loves, 2025 is drawing to a close and it's been truly memorable in so many ways, incredible highs from the arena tour with Alfie, followed by the Les Mis arena tour in Australia, all the 40th anniversary celebrations for Les Mis culminating in the Royal Variety Performance at the Albert Hall (which is just spectacular!), writing, producing and of course singing on the new album Glow, recording T.V. shows which will appear in due course and all the other opportunities I have been lucky enough to be given to connect with everyone - not least being Love Songs on Radio 2 and the now obligatory 'Call from Ball' complete with dodgy accents and voices. God I've been lucky.

But like all of us there have been personal challenges that have had to be faced, not least of which is the loss of my dearest Mum. I had the supreme privilege of sharing her last days

with her, along with my sister Kat, and right to the end she was in control, tearless, funny and finally at peace. It was rather beautiful if such things can be described in such a way and certainly profound and deeply moving. I will miss her so much and Christmas will be very different for the family this year but with so many extraordinary memories of this wonderful Welsh wonder. I will only rejoice that I had her in my life for so long.

So onwards to 2026 and it looks like another busy, exciting and challenging one is shaping up. The Album, Glow, came from an idea I had with my bestie, Amy Wadge to just sit together along with Zak Lloyd, another Welsh wonder and create an original body of work I could be proud of and that is exactly what we've done. I couldn't be happier with the result and when I tour next year I hope you will have heard it, enjoyed it, have responded to some of the songs on a deeper level and be ready to have 'The best night of your life' (spoiler alert... that's the title of one of the

songs) because that's exactly what I intend to do. It's a longer tour than normal visiting places I haven't been to for years or have never played. I can't bloody wait!!

There are other exciting adventures awaiting and perhaps next year will see my final performance as Tarent. I hope I will get to bid this fantastic production of Les Mis Arena Spectacular a proper and memorable an revoir.

Finally, as always, I have to thank all of you for the kindness, compassion, support and joy you bring me. It still takes my breath away that so many of you have followed and embraced everything I do and let's be honest, we do have fun together.

So let's focus on the positive in this complex, rapidly changing and challenging world we find ourselves in and grab those moments of joy whenever and wherever we find them. I'll hopefully see you next year along the road and until then, I send you all the love in the world, health and happiness to you and yours and take good care.

God Bless
Nih
x

FASCINATORS, FIZZ AND FROLICS!

By Jen Garner



The fun began with what to wear? Was it to be..long dress, short dress, trousers, hat, fascinator or just hair? Rose chose more of a hat than me. Mine was more two or three feathers... that got a bit dishevelled throughout the day!

Anyway, in beautiful weather on August 14th, my friend Rose and I traveled down to Newmarket. We were so looking forward to The Races and seeing Michael and Alfie in Concert the next day. The train journeys all went smoothly which is always a bonus. We met such friendly, helpful people showing us the way to our hotel. In restaurants and bars and we even managed to pick up a few

questionable racing tips along the way!

Conveniently, there was a shuttle bus between town and the racecourse and again such friendly, chatty people kept us company whilst queuing. As soon as we arrived in all our finery, Rose had a problem. The strap on her shoe broke and for a while it was 'hopalong Rose' until hallelujah! We found a shop selling sandals, flip flops, hats etc. She bought some sparkly flip flops which blended in well with a variety of clothing choices ranging from long and short dresses to jump suits, smart jeans and tops. In fact, anything seemed to be acceptable as long as it was smart and tidy.



After familiarizing ourselves with all the layout, we made our way to The Premium Paddock, plumping for a nice spot in front of the stage, where the horses were thundering along the track behind us at the back of The Paddock. The Totes were very handy and very importantly the food, drinks and loos! There was a Grandstand area each side of the stage and a garden area nearby, in which you could picnic if you chose to.

Having met up with Claire, Donna, Sharon, their friends and quite a few more familiar faces, the time from 4:30pm until the concert just flew by. There was plenty of chatting, picnicking, one or two Proseccos



and some betting going on! Thank you Claire for my huge Birthday Pizza!

There was a fantastic atmosphere even before the concert began. Michael appeared on stage beforehand waving and in his shorts showing off his suntanned legs. Some of the band and Murray also acknowledged us with smiles and waves.

At this 'Meet' all bets were on Michael and Alfie showing their true colours with a winning performance. There was a slight delay at the beginning due to, I believe, some sound issues but suddenly 'They Were Off!' They came onto the stage full of high energy to 'Aprach Zarathustra' and rocked their way, together with the enthusiastic punters, through 'Viva Las Vegas' and 'Rocking All Over The World'.

The boys had a slightly reduced band compared to the Arena Tour as the stage was smaller. Nevertheless they were phenomenal as always. The concert flowed wonderfully through 'Salisbury Hill', 'Proud', 'You'll Be Back', (love this) 'He Lives in You', 'Up Where We Belong', 'The Gambler', 'You're The Voice', 'The Greatest Show', 'Les Mis intro', 'Empty Chairs', 'Stars', 'Bring Him Home' and 'Rule The World'.

This is a brief synopsis of an award



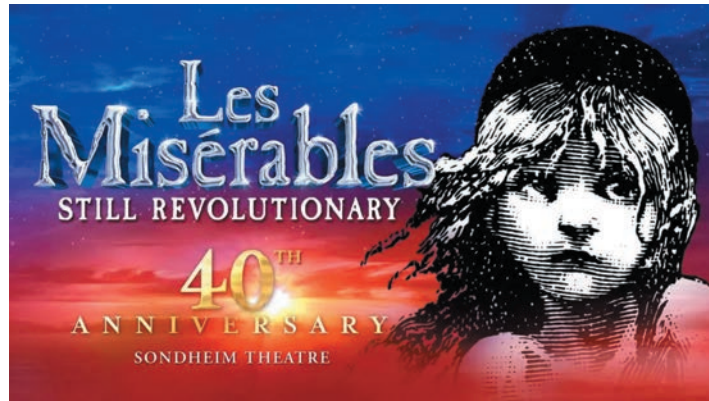
winning, magical concert, that raced to the finishing line, lighting up an August sky, already bright but now turning dusk. Michael and Alfie reappeared to the delight of everyone to sing 'Welcome Home' and 'The Frankie Valli Medley'. When they finished with 'Put Your Loving Hands out Baby' I'm sure the packed paddock of concert goers did just that!

This was over one and a half hours of pure bliss from start to finish. It was a fabulous finale to a glorious day at The Races, when Michael and Alfie reached the winning

post with flying colours. It was a first class, exciting performance with both of them on top form. How could they lose ? They couldn't ...romping their way home with the crowds cheering them on.

Time for us to make home, either by taxi or shuttle bus with heads full of music, Michael and Alfie! We had a fantastic day of music and a few bets. All in all, I think we lost about £10 each which, in the scheme of things, wasn't too bad. Michael said he'd won £100. I wish he'd given us a couple of tips!





On the 8th October it was the *Les Misérables* 40th Anniversary Gala day, so a trip to London for me, sadly not to see the show as I was unsuccessful in getting tickets, but to do the next best thing – head over to the Sondheim Theatre stage door, with the main goal of seeing Michael and Bradley Jaden. After a stressful train journey I arrived at Sondheim, just in time to see Bradley Jaden but, sadly no Michael. I waited and waited a good couple of hours but no sign. I was feeling disappointed.

It transpired that a lot of the cast had been sent to the entrance at the front of the theatre before the show, I think for photos etc. Having waited for ages at the stage door, I was in need of something to eat and drink and a much needed sit down. After a visit to the coffee shop, I returned to the theatre to be told by someone else who had been waiting, that the cast had come out of the theatre for something to eat including Michael and I'd missed him. I was gutted.

Not to be put off, I waited outside the theatre as I wanted to see the blue carpet event (photoshoot) featuring cast old and new. Whilst waiting with my friends and happened to look up and who should I spot through the window, the man himself. I exclaimed to my friends "look there's Michael" – he was chatting to someone in the theatre. Just by pure chance, he looked down and gave us a wave and big smile. We were so happy, it was even better when a few minutes later he came out of the theatre and we got a second wave and smile. It was worth waiting.

The evening got better with the blue carpet event. We got prime position near the press pack and got to see everyone having their



photos taken, even getting to see Michael being interviewed for social media. Although I wasn't one of the lucky ones getting a ticket, I still had a brilliant day and managed to get lots of photos of Michael (whilst dodging the members of the press heads!).

Julie Vidler



MICHAEL’S MUSIC CHANGES EVERYTHING

by Linda McKee



I first became a Michael Ball fan shortly after my husband’s death on January 2, 2019. I met my husband, Donny, when I was fifteen. When I was introduced to him, I said to myself, “I am going to spend the rest of my life with this guy”. We married five years later and enjoyed the life together that I dreamed we would (with the ups and downs of any marriage). Unfortunately, I lost the love of my life to Glioblastoma. When Donny passed, I was devastated and completely inconsolable. I became a shell of a person - just existing from day to day - not wanting to live without my soulmate; my rock; my best friend.

One day, several months later, I was mindlessly flipping through Facebook and I stopped when I heard this fabulous voice singing the song ‘Love Changes Everything’ – which made me cry....but I seemed calmed by that voice. I searched further and found I was watching a young Michael Ball. Then I found other videos. Some that made me cry, some that brought back wonderful memories, some that actually made me smile and yes - laugh. As I looked for more and current videos I found out about this talented man and his career. I found myself interested in more things outside of my grief – with the help of my beloved daughter; my incredibly loving and supportive family and many friends.

I eventually joined the Michael Ball Fan Club. Over the next few years, I made friends in other parts of the US and other countries - I have made so many English friends! We shared our love of Michael and shared mutual stories. These friendships (which continued to grow) remain to this day and I treasure them all. I now live life again (with occasional moments, of course). I have probably every one of Michael’s CD’s – his voice never ceases to amaze me and calm me when I am sad or anxious. I also have all his DVD’s, one of my favorites being his show at The Donmar which I consider a Tour de Force performance. I have also bought both of the books he has authored (and have his third on pre-order.) I have watched

innumerable clips and videos both past and current. Michael is truly a man of many talents and a master of all.

I will always be grateful to Michael for helping me through the grief of losing Donny and getting back to living and enjoying life once again. I’ve wanted to tell him how he makes a difference in his fans’ lives in so many ways. Maybe this story will do that.

Linda McKee



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NOVEMBER 2026

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SUNDAY LOVE SONGS AND MY WEDDING

by Cheryl Rhodes

When I got engaged, I gave Michael a 'Save The Date' card. While he was too busy to attend our wedding, he was very much part of it, even kindly posing with me when I gave him the card.

On the eve of my wedding, I was contacted to appear on Michael's 'Sunday Love Songs' show on the radio. I was very nervous but we had such a laugh over my dress being too big and knocking the candles over as I walked down the side. The guests had to pick them up!

We celebrated our 1st wedding anniversary on Sunday 9th November 2025 but unfortunately I was ill. Fortunately I had Michael to cheer me up with his Sunday show which made the wedding anniversary better. My husband and I listen to him weekly and he knows how to make people laugh!



DECEMBER 2026						
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HAVING A BALL AT SEA!

Words and pictures by Kate Potter



What better way to celebrate my 50th birthday than with a holiday, meeting other Michael Ball fans and watching a performance from the man himself?

This was my first cruise and travelling solo I was a bit apprehensive. However, everyone I met was lovely and (more importantly) happy to talk about Michael!

Michael joined us on the Sky Princess at Lanzarote and was spotted in the audience of a Sam Bailey show onboard. The next day there came an announcement informing us that Michael was unwell and unable to perform. His Wednesday shows were all postponed to the Thursday meaning he had to do four shows in one day. Poor Michael!

I was fortunate to attend his third show of the marathon and I'm sure he must have been flagging but as the true professional that he is, Michael pulled out all the stops and gave us 100%. His 45 minute show stretched to a full hour to the delight of us all.

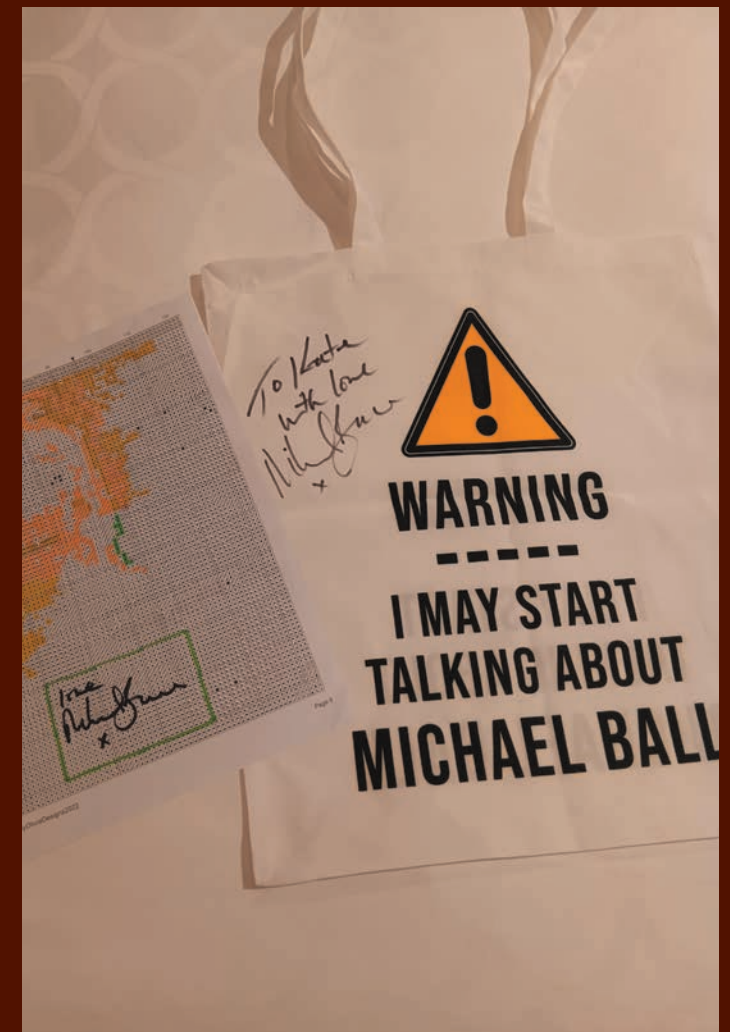
He packed the time with every song you could hope for, starting with 'He Lives In You', followed by his own 'Tennessee Dreams', 'The

Gambler' and 'The Impossible Dream'. We enjoyed both *Les Mis* favourites: 'Empty Chairs At Empty Tables' and 'Stars'. There was a condensed Party Time section with 'One Step Out Of Time' and 'You Can't Stop The Beat'. He was in excellent voice for 'Love Changes Everything' and he finished with 'The Wonder Of You'.

Michael was in good humour throughout, joking that his stomach upset had meant he was attended to by cruise staff in hazmat suits and that he was concerned about the big notes and was clenching his backside! When we all shouted out that his Eurovision entry came second he said: "Why do you always remember that?" and asked us not to talk about number 2s!

The cherry on my birthday cake came when I managed to retrieve a bag I had left with the Imagine Cruise staff. Michael had kindly signed a cross-stitch pattern (of him) I've been working on and the bag itself.

This cruise was a huge testament to Michael's professionalism and his desire not to disappoint his fans. He went the extra mile despite feeling rough and that's exactly why we all love him.



BALL & BOE IN LIVERPOOL

Kimberley Davies kindly sent in these wonderful photos from the Ball & Boe concert in April at the M&S Bank Arena in Liverpool.





THE WEAKEST LINK

Michael recently took part on a special charity edition of *The Weakest Link*. With a group of players all made up of Radio 2 personalities, the group worked to raise as much money as possible, before whittling it down to the strongest link who won the money for their chosen cause. Michael played alongside Jo Whiley, Tony Blackburn, Zoe Ball, Trevor Nelson, Rylan Clark, Scott Mills and Sally Traffic, with the game hosted by Romesh Ranganathan.

Each round the players voted off who they believed to be 'The Weakest Link'. The final two were Michael and Rylan, who faced off in a tense head-to-head which ultimately had to be settled with sudden death questions. Michael, with his trademark competitive nature, emerged triumphant, being the strongest link and securing £11,600 for Shooting Stars Children's Hospice.



Christmas is coming and it can mean only one thing. Time for Magic's West End Christmas at the London Palladium!

I had been counting down the days to seeing the show and the day had finally arrived. I'd seen the show last year and it was so good, I decided to book again. I knew I wasn't going to be disappointed, especially with a few of my favourites stars appearing but, WOW, it was incredible! It was a show full of fun to get everyone in the Christmas spirit. The show was filled with stars from the West End performing best loved songs from the musicals, together with a sprinkling of festive songs. The highlights for me were John Owen Jones singing the breathtaking 'Bring Him Home', but, of course the star of the show was Michael.

Given that he'd been unwell a couple of days before the show, you'd never have guessed. He performed four tracks, 'The Impossible Dream', 'You Can't Stop The Beat', 'Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas' and 'Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree'. He was amazing – well when isn't he!

Before the show my friends and I were lucky enough to get a group photo before Michael had to dash in for rehearsals. After the show got to see Michael at the stage door again but he was in a hurry to leave – Andrew, his PA said Michael had to be up early the next morning. Michael gave a cheery goodbye and I left the theatre on a high!

Julie Vidler



THE ROYAL VARIETY PERFORMANCE

With *Les Miserables* featuring at this year's Royal Variety Performance, Michael moves up the list as a frequent performer at this long running event. Held annually in the United Kingdom to raise money for the Royal Variety Charity, which King Charles III is life-patron of, the Royal Variety Performance can trace it's history back over a century. The first one was staged in 1912, when it was known as the Royal Command Performance.

From the 1960s the show has been televised each year. Countless stars have appeared on the stage, featuring acts as diverse as Laurel and Hardy, Judy Garland, Norman Wisdom, Sammy Davis Jr., Penn and Teller, The Beatles and Rod Stewart. A small elite group of performers have been asked to return again and again. While the unofficial record belongs to Max Bygraves, who notched a whopping twenty appearances at Royal Variety Performances over the years, other frequent performers include Cliff Richard, who has eight appearances as a solo artist and a further five with The Shadows, and Dame Shirley Bassey, who has performed nine times.

With this year's appearance, Michael has now graced the stage there on eight occasions. Here is a snapshot from each one – and all of them are on YouTube if you want a trip down memory lane!



2025: 40th anniversary cast of *Les Miserables*



2020: 'You'll Never Walk Alone' with Tom Moore



2017: 'You Bring Me Sunshine' with Alfie Boe



2007: Cast performance from *Hairspray*



1997: 'People Will Say We're In Love' with Barbara Cook



1992: 'You Don't Have To Say You Love Me' and 'If I Can Dream'



1991: A tribute to Cameron Mackintosh



1989: *Aspects Of Love* with 'Love Changes Everything'

Val Self decided to ask AI if it could come up with a poem about Michael. AI sometimes gets things wrong, but in this case, this is pretty accurate!

Michael Ball's voice so smooth and bright
Echoes of emotion, a gentle night
A soothing balm for soulful ears
Vibes of joy, and happy tears

His songs transport, to a place so fine
Where love and laughter, entwine
A master of melody, a king of the stage
Michael Ball's vibes, turn the page

With every note, a story unfolds
Of love, of life, of dreams and gold
His voice, a warm and welcoming breeze
That lifts and carries, with gentle ease

In the theatre of life, he's a star
A beacon shining, near and far
A voice that's smooth, a heart that's true
Michael Ball's music, forever new

In the silence, his voice remains
A gentle whisper, that soothes the pains
Of love and loss, of joy and strife
Michael Ball's music, a lifetime's rife

With every chord, a memory made
A symphony, of love and shade
His legacy, a treasure trove
A shining star, that lights the show



Photo: Kimberley Davies



RAFFLE WINNER

The Fan Club's summer raffle was won by Suzanne Gilham, who is shown here with her bumper collection of prizes that included a signed copy of *The Empire hardback book*, *Michael Ball Tour 1997 Mug*, *We Are More Than One cassette*, *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Charity souvenir brochure*, *On With The Show Tour VIP Pass* and much more!

This photo was taken in 1989 at work, when I had just one little photo of Michael on the wall next to my desk. I couldn't believe how hearing him sing affected me – he was wonderful. When he was appearing in *Aspects of Love* I saw him in every Saturday Matinee. I have been all over the country since, seeing Michael in concerts and various theatre shows. During all those years, my late husband took me everywhere to see Michael, bless him. I couldn't believe it when Michael announced he was going to do *Aspects* again. I was so pleased he returned to the show, and I was lucky enough to see him and get my programme signed.

I went to a concert in Ipswich with my daughter and we had Meet & Greet, and while I have had plenty of times when I have seen Michael at stage door, it was still great to do. All these years later, things haven't changed – he is still amazing!

Shirley Mullins



THE MICHAEL BALL FAN CLUB ONLINE

www.mbfcc.uk

The Michael Ball Fan Club is 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: **MBFC33**



MICHAEL BALL

NEW ALBUM "GLOW" FOR 2026
PRE ORDER THE NEW ALBUM
FOR EXCLUSIVE TOUR ACCESS

GLOW UK TOUR 2026

AUGUST

WED	26	CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE
THU	27	IPSWICH REGENT THEATRE
SAT	29	OXFORD NEW THEATRE
SUN	30	BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL

SEPTEMBER

WED	02	LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC HALL
THU	03	BRADFORD LIVE
SAT	05	SHEFFIELD CITY HALL
SUN	06	HULL CONNEXIN LIVE
TUE	08	GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL
WED	09	EDINBURGH USHER HALL
FRI	11	NEWCASTLE O2 CITY HALL
SAT	12	YORK BARBICAN
MON	14	MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL
WED	16	STOKE-ON-TRENT REGENT THEATRE
THU	17	LEICESTER DE MONTFORT HALL
SAT	19	NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CONCERT HALL
SUN	20	MILTON KEYNES THEATRE
TUE	22	BRIGHTON DOME
WED	23	BRISTOL BEACON
FRI	25	SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION
SAT	26	BOURNEMOUTH PAVILION THEATRE
MON	28	TORQUAY PRINCESS THEATRE
TUE	29	CARDIFF NEW THEATRE

OCTOBER

THU	01	LONDON THE PALLADIUM
FRI	02	PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

