

ON THE BALL

Issue 87



Hi Everyone

Here we are just over half way through 2025 and Michael has certainly been very busy touring with Alfie in the Spring followed by great success on the Australian leg of the LES Mis Arena tour.

A highlight for us was going to Cardiff in March for the first night of the "Together At Home" tour. We were on our way when we got a message saying Michael would love to see us, in his dressing room, after the Meet and Greet. Could we manage that? Well, we couldn't say no! When we arrived he told us that Alfie and him were really looking forward to the tour but he was very nervous. We had a good chat and reassured him that he had nothing to worry about. He showed us two jackets, saying he couldn't make his mind up which one he should wear so could we help him choose, which we were happy to do. After a couple of photos we left him to have his rest.

Michael has once again written a lovely letter telling us all about his plans for the rest of the year. Many thanks go to all of you who have shared photos and experiences for inclusion in this issue.

Love

Maureen and Gill



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

Back cover photograph by Julie Vidler.

© Michael Ball Fan Club 2025 Website: www.mbfcluk www.facebook.com/groups/michaelballfanclub/

Dear Everyone,

Just finished my birthday weekend in the glorious sunshine of the south coast and now have the chance to reflect on what has been an extraordinary 6 months.

The Arena tour with Alfie was just a total joy and we were blown away by the response to it. It was amazing to see so many of you there and the only draw back to playing these big places is it's so hard to see you at the stage doors (cos there really aren't any!!) to have a chat. On the occasions it was possible to meet in person I can only tell you it made me so happy to hear how much you liked the song choices and styling of the shows and we had a blast. 5 days after that finished we were off to Australia and it was

just wonderful.

This version of Les Mis really connects with audiences and the reaction from the Aussies was just extraordinary. I got the chance to reconnect with so many of the Aussie fans which was wonderful and hopefully I'll get back down there again soon. I bloody love it there.

But the big question is, is that the last time I will be doing the show? Well, the official 40th anniversary is in October so a little something might be planned but as to whether I shall return to play Javert in the full concert version at some point, we will have to wait and see. Never say never 😊.

So this summer I'm going to slow down a bit. I think I need to. It's lovely being back doing the radio after 6 weeks off and I've decided that I want to work on the next

album with the incredible Amy Wadge, writing and co-producing and that will lead to a tour, hopefully early in the new year.

It feels strange to be able to talk about all these wonderful things happening when everyday we look around us and see so much hardship and misery and turmoil in the world that we seem to have so little control over. All I can think to do is try to give as much positivity and kindness and support wherever I can in the hope that it makes a bit of difference to the world. It's not much but it's all we really have to offer.

So my lovelies, stay safe, positive and kind, thanks as always for being there for me, sharing so much with me and making me want to be better and I'll see you very soon I hope.

I Bloody love you

Mike
x

BALL & BOE BLISS IN BRIGHTON!

By Beth Barbara Brooks



My sister, Jan Dykes and I flew from Jekyll Island, Georgia to Brighton for the last concert of the 'Together at Home' tour. We met up with my friend Carole Sandell from Worthing. We were also joined by friends Janet Delasalle and Claire Shorter at our hotel, which was next to the venue.

We attended the Meet & Greet and to me, Michael is even younger and better looking than in photos, if possible! He and Alfie were both charming although the time to chat was too short.

The concert was one of the best I've ever seen! It made the long flight worth it! It was an absolute pleasure to come to Brighton for such a great experience.





A multi-national Ballette gathering: Jan Dykes from Jekyll Island, Georgia, Carole Sandell from Worthing, UK, Beth Brooks from Savannah, Georgia, Claire Shorter from Chelmsford, UK, and Janet Delasalle from France.



A MAGICAL EVENING WITH BALL & BOE

by Samantha Mason

After securing front row tickets in Birmingham for the first time ever, I was counting down the days to Michael and Alfie's tour, 'Together at Home'.

Before the show I commissioned a unique shirt to wear – as you can see from my photo! Little did I know this would cause so much attention!

The support act, this time, was The Conjurers – a duo who performed a magic act and who had performed in Las Vegas. I'd read mixed reviews about their act so made sure I was there in plenty of time to catch them and make my own mind up. Before their show they were mingling with the audience as part of their first trick. My shirt was immediately spotted and I was picked to go up on stage to help them during the show. What an exciting experience as I'd never done anything like that before! My reward for helping was a signed copy of Michael and Alfie's tour programme. That was well worth all the nerves!

Now on with the main event.... Wow what a show and what an amazing night. The boys did not disappoint! Their energy and voices were just sublime. There were funny anecdotes (the comment about Alfie being "big down under" was hilarious). The friendship between Michael and Alfie is so lovely and you can see they genuinely love what they do and the fact they do it together. The choice of songs was perfect.

My favourite part as always was the *Les Misérables* section! This has to go down as the best tour yet so far.

Thank you, boys, for another fabulous evening. Please don't leave it too long till the next one!





AT HOME WITH MICHAEL AND ALFIE!

BY JEN GARNER



It really is hard to know where to begin. My head is full of beautiful music, beautiful staging, sounds, visuals, lighting, songs and people.

They say that 'home is where the heart is' and Michael and Alfie certainly had our hearts this tour. The backing singers Tor, Michael and Bex, led by Callum and Murray were superb. The sets were amazing... from the tree (which always stood out in my mind) wondering if it represented 'a family tree' or maybe 'the tree of life'? Whatever it's significance, it was gorgeous and the visuals of *Les Mis* were breathtaking. Being a true Northerner, I just loved The Ferry Across The Mersey filming and of course seeing Michael and Alfie visiting Anfield after their CD signing in Liverpool!

Every venue I was fortunate enough to get to, Michael and Alfie were in perfect voice and unison. Only once did Alfie slightly miss his cue and this obviously made them giggle! The banter between them was infectious and at times had the audience in stitches. From Alfie being "big down under" to all the football banter, discussions over the title of the next album/tour and the meaning of 'Home' to each of them. Personally I favour 'Michael and Alfie Together in Ibiza'! At one concert a lady gave Michael a card and she'd misspelt Alfie's name, writing Alfie Bow! You can imagine the hilarity! Michael asked her name, to which Alfie quipped "don't encourage her". When she told them she was called Debbie... he said "how do you spell that?" They were both funny, sincere and definitely entertaining.

Their choices of songs could not have been better or more poignant. If I forget to mention some, I'm sure people will fill in any gaps.

I absolutely loved the intro 'Solsbury Hill'... which I thought set the tone of the whole concert. They performed so many brilliant songs that I find it hard to pick favourites. I totally loved 'Baker Street', 'He Ain't Heavy', portraying the sincerity of their friendship. 'Up Where We Belong' was amazing and 'Rule The World', when the auditoriums were lit up with everyone waving their phone torches. This was wonderful to see because, as many fans have discussed, these shows were held in huge arenas. Some songs really stood out for me... like 'Homeward Bound', written by Paul Simon on Widnes railway station, not far from where I live. Also 'Ferry Across The Mersey' – and I never failed than to be moved by their beautiful rendition of 'A Thousand Years'. I know that 'Proud' is special to Michael and was another rousing and fantastic performance.

Also included was 'Hero' – a great song, apparently suggested by Andrew (Michael's PA). Michael introduced it making me giggle, with his excellent Andrew impression!

When Michael and Alfie sang 'Empty Chairs At Empty Tables' together, you could hear a pin drop. Michael singing 'Stars' brought the house down and the audience to their feet, cheering wildly, as did Alfie's rendition of 'Bring Him Home', as always so beautiful and touching. I remember Andrew Lloyd Webber once saying that Michael had "a God given voice" which is so very true.

We were treated to 'He Lives In You', 'You'll be Back', 'You're The Voice', 'The Greatest Show' and 'The Gambler'. Wow, weren't we lucky? What fabulous songs and of course, what happens in Vegas according to Michael stays in Vegas!! 'The Gambler', I have to say, is a real favourite. It's so upbeat and you really can't help but

join in and sing along.

Another fun moment was when Michael and Alfie fired Tour T-shirts out of cannons which was reminiscent of Michael's 'Broadway Bangers'!

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end. Michael and Alfie thanked the ensemble before saying goodnight after 'Rule The World'. They left the stage but reappeared to resounding applause and shouts for more! The lovely song 'Welcome Home' was enjoyed by all, most people now on their feet ready to dance and 'party' to 'Viva Las Vegas'.

What a duo, what a show! I'm sure that everyone would leave singing 'I've Had The Time of My Life!'.

I feel I also have to mention 'The Conjurors' from Las Vegas. They were the warm up act for the show and were certainly different and uniquely entertaining.

Home concerts, of course, always seem to be the best and for me this time, I suppose it was Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and Leeds. Having said that, each and every venue was special in its own way and for a particular reason. I wasn't at The O2 but I heard it was awesome!

Sometimes memories were made at the stage door, sometimes catching Michael, Alfie or part of the incredible band or the backing singers going in or out and having a bit of banter or the occasional photo.

Liverpool will live in my heart with all the Anfield banter and Alfie persuading Michael to wear the Liverpool strip. Not him stripping at Liverpool as Alfie wickedly joked! Alfie surprised us by going off script, as he put it,

by performing the iconic 'You'll Never Walk Alone', almost a capella. This was phenomenal and raised The M&S Bank Arena roof! It was so moving and most unexpected.

winner of The Grand National that afternoon! He seemed so relaxed and enjoying himself and was happy to have a photo which was lovely (thanks to Sue!) An already buzzing bunch

enjoyed hearing all about it.

At Manchester it was the bass guitarist Don's birthday and we all sang 'Happy Birthday' to him. Other unforgettable moments were saying 'Hello' to Mr. Ball Senior at Glasgow and seeing Michael's Mum at Brighton.

Just to briefly mention the great weather and smooth travel throughout the tour. This is always welcome! It almost felt like Summer at times, especially in Bournemouth and Birmingham where we were able to sit out eating and drinking, whether it be tea, coffee or cocktails!

I think we must have traveled, walked and danced a million miles. I'm convinced that Michael and Alfie are good for the soul.

On that note and I really didn't know whether or not to mention this, but the day after I got home, totally buzzing and running on adrenaline, getting all the washing and jobs done extra quickly – I really did have some sad news. I lost my lifelong best buddy and soulmate so very suddenly. Obviously I've been shocked and devastated but with the vivid and vibrant memories of such an amazing few weeks, full of joy and happiness, I've been able to keep mostly positive and cherish all the good times. It just shows that we should make the most of each day as best we can and 'Thank You' Michael and Alfie for lifting my spirits.

The tour was fabulous. All the tours have been unbelievable but this one really was! One of the backing singers commented it had been like one big happy family both on and off stage... which I think sums it all up.



Photo: Julie Vidler

After the Liverpool concert Ros, Val, Sue, Pam and I braved the chilly wind to be rewarded by Michael stopping the car to chat to us. 'No' he said, when he was asked if he backed the

of fans went home buzzing more than ever, the cold wind forgotten! It was a pity that Rose and Jane had to leave to catch their train just before Michael drove out but I know they

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES TO SEE BALL & BOE!

by Judith Allan



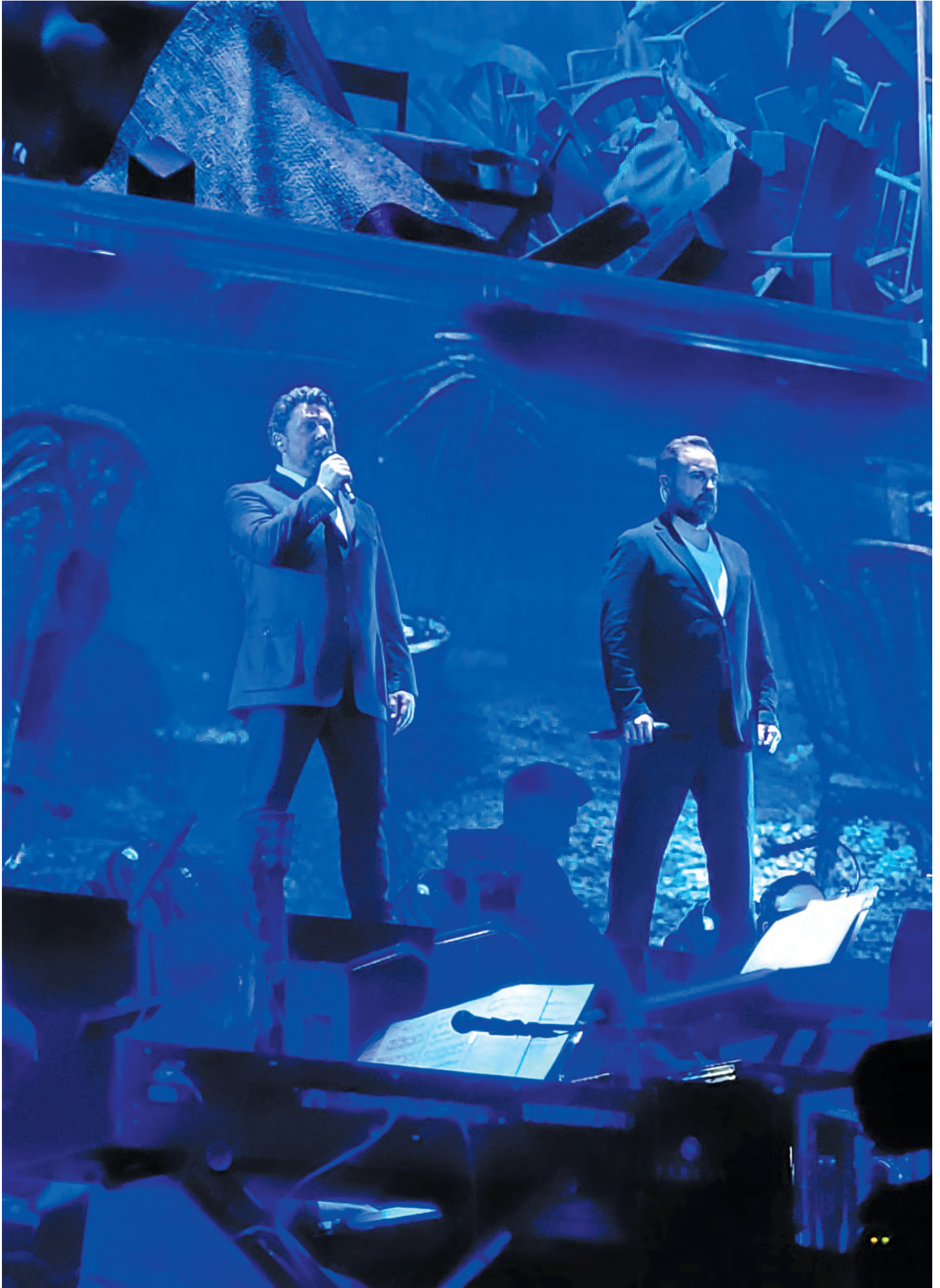
I intended to have a trip to the UK to see Michael and Alfie on tour. I was going to travel from Canada to see the boys in Aberdeen and do the Meet And Greet on the latest tour. However, in October, just a few weeks after I got the concert ticket for Aberdeen, I got really sick with pneumonia and other breathing issues. I didn't know if I would make it over to Scotland for the concert because I was signed off work for three months or so and had to have a lot of tests and doctor's appointments. Fortunately the medication I was given worked and I thankfully got better and got back to work.

I set off as planned and arrived in Scotland on the Sunday. However, injuries I sustained in a bad car accident 23 years ago started to act up. My knee went out on the plane and the airliner staff had to be wheelchair me off the plane. I wasn't going to let my bad knee stop me though! I got a brace and a cane and trudged on.

I made it to the venue and hobbled up for the Meet And Greet. This was my second time meeting Michael and my first time meeting Alfie. Both of them were true gentleman. Michael even asked about my knee – he's such a sweetheart! I gave them both gifts from Canada which they accepted with thanks and smiles. I hope to see them wearing their shirts and hats from Canada one day!

Michael graciously signed my paperback copy of *Different Aspects*



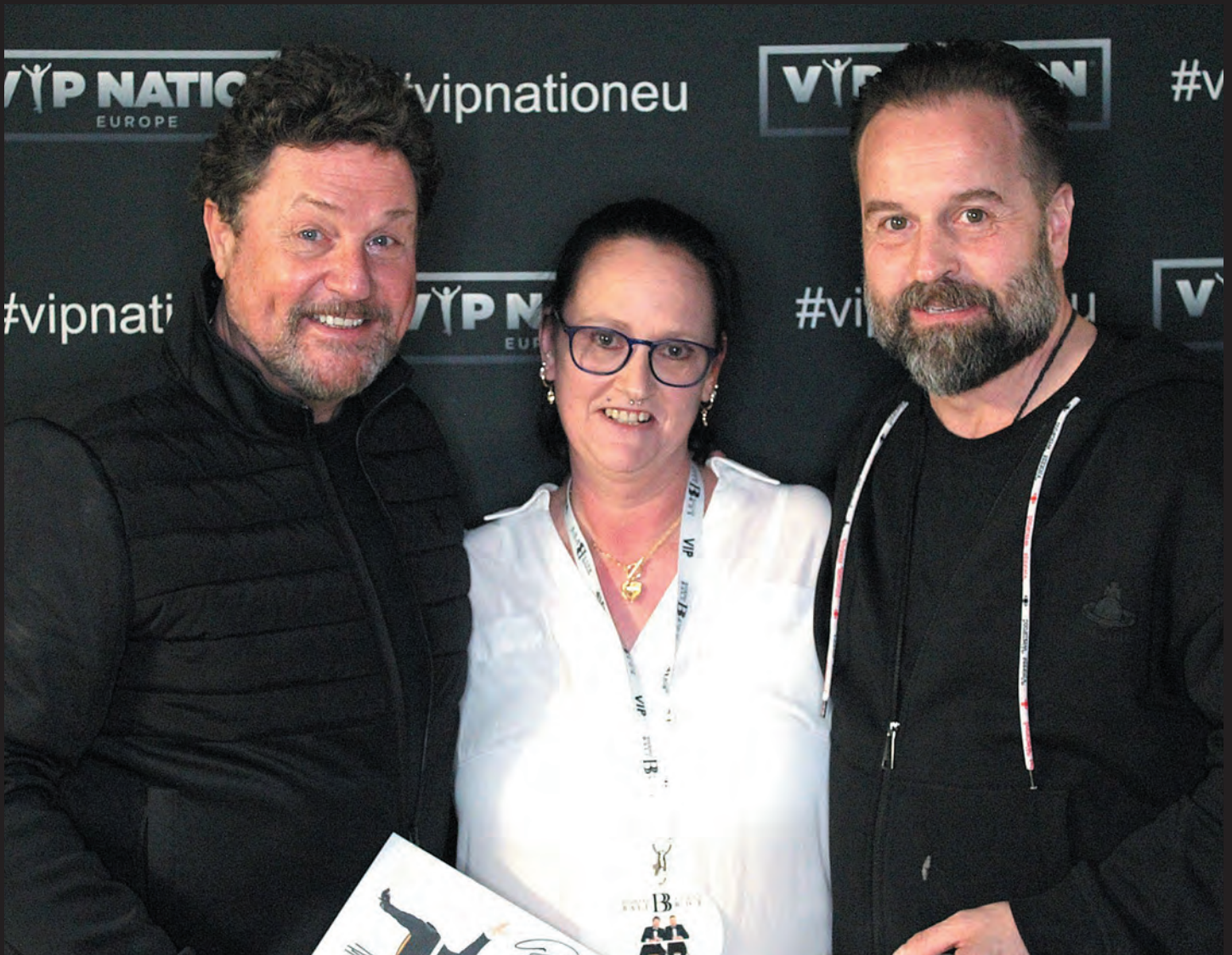


for me. I was so excited to talk to them prior to the show. And as for the concert – well, that was, in a word, phenomenal! My best friend's mother-in-law came to the concert with me and she didn't know who Michael and Alfie were. I can tell you after that concert, she is now a big fan of them both!

I enjoyed the concert so much I even decided on the train back to Glasgow on the Tuesday afternoon to get a ticket last minute for the Glasgow concert. Once again had another phenomenal night. Both nights I got up at the end and danced in front of the stage as best I could with my knee. I can't wait to come back over to the UK to see Michael and Alfie again. I just love them and their music, they are simply the best!







THE POWER OF MUSIC SAVED MY LIFE

by Amanda Lucas

It managed to achieve a huge ambition of mine by going to see Michael and Alfie on tour. I wanted to thank Alfie personally for saving my life. I don't say that lightly.

I was abused when I was a child and as a result of the trauma, I felt I couldn't leave my house. One day, two years ago, I was in a very dark place and was thinking about ending it all. I was listening to Alfie's 'Open Arms' album. As I listened, I was taking in every word and Alfie's voice singing them stopped me from taking my own life.

I had stayed home for 30 years but I was so grateful to Alfie, I really wanted to thank him in person. The idea of doing that meant I was finally able to pluck up all the strength to make the journey to from Goole to Leeds, with the help of a nice lady who supported me when I got there. Her name was Tracy, she was so lovely – she helped me to go and see him at the meet and greet. She's an angel in my book.

When I finally met Alfie and Michael in person, Michael was lovely and I was able to achieve my ambition and thank Alfie for saving my life. I give him a letter explaining how his 'Open Arms' album changed everything for me.

After the show, which was amazing, Tracy took me to the stage door. As Alfie came out, he saw me and he told me he read my letter. He gave me a big hug and said I was a strong woman. I was so overwhelmed that he had taken the time to read my letter and he was so humble, kind and caring.

I will never forget that night – Michael and Alfie are wonderful. Alfie has made me feel so strong and I'm sure he and Michael will have done that for others, and most of the time they don't even know it. I'm so grateful I managed to talk to Alfie and let him know how much he has done for me. Music really is a healer.





THE BALL BOND

by Nancy Garcia

I am one of the lucky ones. I have been able to travel to the UK to see Michael live in concert quite a few times. Along the way, I have met many fans from the UK and around the world and especially enjoyed meeting fans from the USA. For many years, I traveled with two close US friends, Ria and Lila. Unfortunately, Lila passed away a few years ago and only recently Ria did as well. I thought that was the end of an era of traveling with Michael fans from home. Don't get me wrong, I love to travel solo. But I kind of enjoy going to Michael (& Alfie too) shows with other American fans. I'm proud that they continue to draw in fans from this side of the Atlantic.

During Michael's solo tour in 2024, I met two fans from the US. They were not new fans, but we

had not met. Susan Knotz from Tennessee and Anna Magliocco Chagnon from Massachusetts. We each traveled separately and met for the first time during the Oxford concert. We mentioned coming together for future concerts, and then we each went our separate ways.

B&B announced their 2025 concert in September 2024, and a new chapter of my Michael fan experience began. We followed through on our promise. Anna and Susan joined me to experience northern England and Scotland while enjoying the music of the B&B tour.

Susan arrived earlier in the tour and was down in southern England. She joined me in Manchester, where we were lucky to catch Michael at the

stage door. This was on Susan's bucket list. Check. After the concert, we drove through the

Lake District and found our way north. I have to add, one of our stops was at Kennedy Chocolates





at Penrith. My family is STILL talking about the great chocolate I brought back for them. We arrived in Aberdeen and stayed at a lovely B&B, The Cove Bay, right on the water. I recommend it highly, along with great food at their restaurant. Anna joined us the following day, arriving at Aberdeen Airport.

For the next few days, we wandered Scotland and enjoyed all things touristy. We drove up to Balmoral (and had tea and cake there). We met one of the owners at Aikenhills Highlands, who allowed us to pet their Highland cows. I've gotta say, playing with the cows was definitely a highlight of our trip, especially for Susan. We also visited Edinburgh and walked through St. Andrew's, where golf was born. Before we knew it, we were in Glasgow,





where our Michael journey would end.

After our final concert in Glasgow, we each went our separate ways. Susan went on to Wales to relax for some time, Anna went on to London before going home, and I flew home from Glasgow. We had a great time and wished we had planned longer touring time to see more. We promised we'd do it again.

We've kept in touch since we got back. With Susan, it's through text and video. Anna & I are closer geographically, so we have managed to meet up in NYC for a meal and catch a Broadway show. Most recently, Anna invited me to join her at Kleinsfeld, where we met Randy Fenoli as she selected her dress for her vow renewal ceremony in the fall. All she had to do was ask, and I was there.

I call this newfound friendship the Ball Bond. Just as he brought me together with Lila and Ria, Michael also brought me together with Anna and Cira one night many years ago in Southampton. Anna and Cira are not just Michael fans; they are also my neighbors in New Jersey, whom I now

consider sisters. I've also had the honor of meeting Petra and Helge from Germany and was one of their wedding guests in London quite a few years ago! I can go on and on talking about the Ball Bond. It is unbreakable and continues to grow.

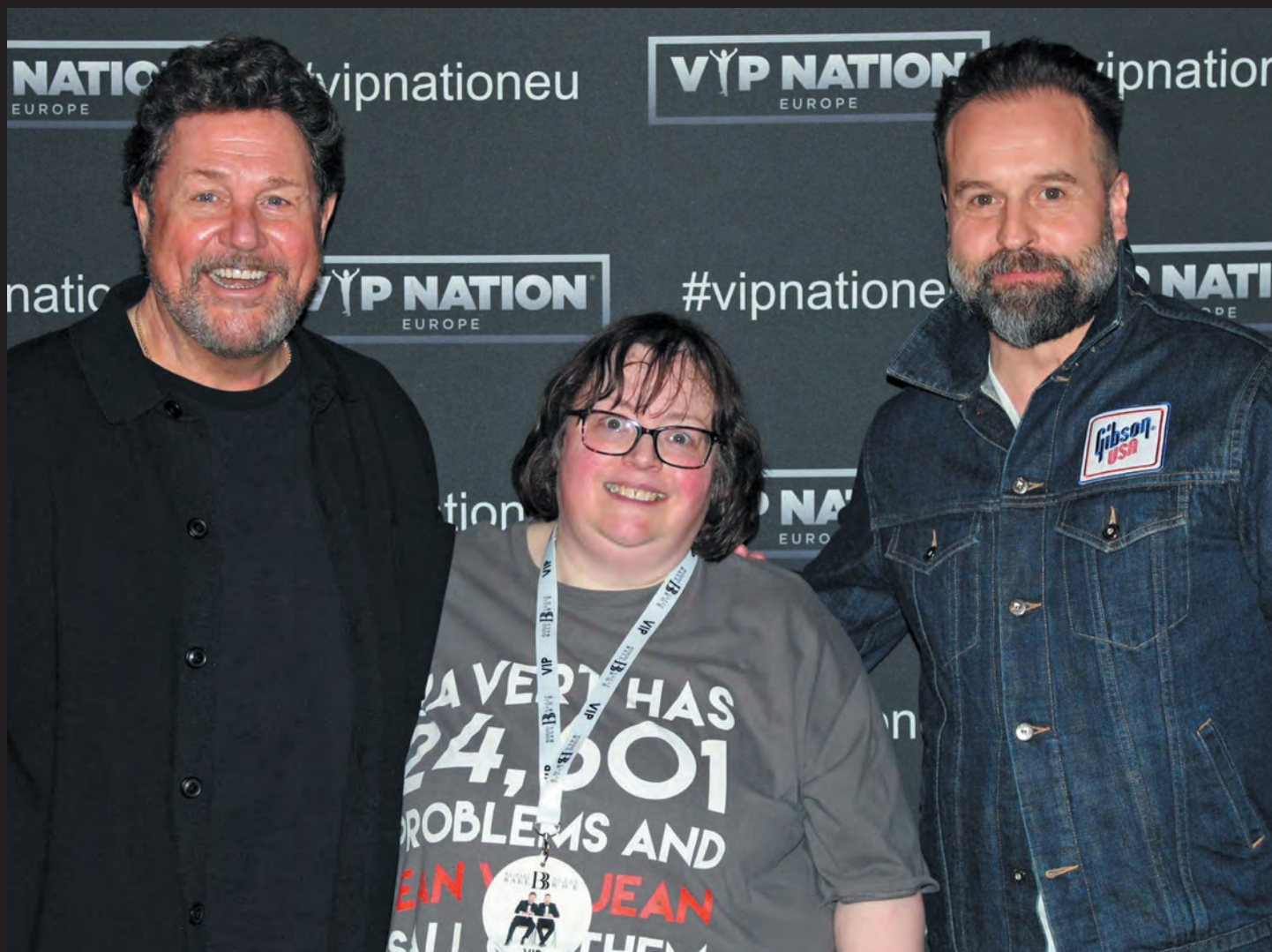
Anna will be renewing her vows in Walt Disney World this fall, and hopefully, that bond will be present again if Susan and I are able to make it.

To the Ball Bond!



MY MANCHESTER MEET AND GREET

BY JEN HOWARD



On April 4th I was lucky enough to go and see Michael and Alfie at the AO in Manchester. I had booked the day off work (for the sake of my team as I can be quite hyper on a concert day, especially when I have a Meet & Greet!!) I got there nice and early and had a chat with some fellow fans before we made our way into the meet and greet room.

I was able to give Michael a "big share bag" of chocolate buttons and Alfie some Bisto. I had a chat with Michael about how he is smashing presenting 'Love Songs' on the radio and reminded him I'd been on it in September. Then I had my programme signed and my photo taken. They were both so lovely with everyone and the room was crammed – no wonder, the boys are both so just brilliant!

The concert was fabulous too; my favourite songs of the night being 'The Gambler', 'Rule The World' and 'Stars'.





BALL & BOE BACK AT THE O2!

by Mark Wittchell

It had been just under four years since the last full Ball and Boe Arena Tour in 2021 so we were definitely ready to party on some of the biggest stages around the UK!

I was lucky to be joined by my mum and my sister Anna in Cardiff, and Anna in Birmingham and London.

Cardiff and Birmingham were brilliant but there is something very special and iconic about the O2 arena in London. Michael and Alfie have performed at the O2 together in 2017, 2020, 2021 and now 2025. They also took to the O2 stage during the *Les Misérables* 25th anniversary celebrations back in 2010.

This year's O2 Arena concert was an absolute sell out and a huge part of the 70,000 tickets that were sold across the 'Together at Home' UK tour as Michael and Alfie celebrated ten years of working together.

Just before the concert started a big 'B and B' curtain draped the stage. The overture began with the legendary BBC Radio DJ Tony Blackburn reciting Michael and Alfie's number one albums over the years. The curtain dropped and the beautiful new staging was revealed, with incredible lighting and video projections. The band was

once again led by Musical Directors Callum McLeod and Murray Gould. Backing singers Tor Hills, Bex Reichwald and Michael Conway had returned to back the boys on this tour. Michael and Alfie bounded onto the stage to rapturous applause as they sang three songs from their new 'Together at Home' album. The Peter Gabriel 1977 classic '**Solsbury Hill**' was quickly followed by Heather Small's '**Proud**' which Michael suggested following his granddaughter Grace's success in the Women's Rugby Sevens in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The 1978 Gerry Rafferty classic '**Baker Street**' really is thrilling to

hear live and was enhanced by a stunning light show with the fantastic saxophone accompaniment by musician Paul Booth.

It was time for Michael and Alfie to reflect on some of their past albums as they performed '**A Thousand Years**' from *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn*. It was great to hear Michael's long standing personal assistant Andrew Ross gain a mention as he suggested that Michael and Alfie should record '**Hero**' from the movie 'Boyhood' which they did on their 'Together Again' album. '**You'll Be Back**' from the hit musical *Hamilton* is always a crowd pleaser and I never tire of seeing Michael and Alfie perform the rousing '**He Lives In You**' from *The Lion King*.

It was time to go back to the 'Together at Home' album for the next set of songs. Michael and Alfie sang a stunning version of '**He Ain't Heavy, He's my Brother**' originally recorded by The Hollies in 1969. '**Ferry Cross the Mersey**' written by Gerry Marsden in 1964 and performed by his band 'Gerry and the Pacemakers' was added as a tribute to the city of Liverpool. Alfie enjoyed showing Michael around Anfield football ground when they visited Liverpool last November for their 'Together at Home' album signings! '**Up Where We Belong**' is the Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes classic which was the theme to the 1982 film *An Officer And A Gentleman*. This certainly had the whole O2 arena singing along! An interesting fact which you may remember is Joe Cocker performed on Series 2 of 'The





Michael Ball Show' for ITV in 1994 when Michael and Joe duetted with a performance of 'The Letter.'

It was great to hear '**Homeward Bound**' performed which was originally recorded by Simon and Garfunkel back in 1966. It was now time for three classics from past albums. First came '**The Gambler**' from the 'Together In Vegas' album which was originally sung by the incredible Kenny Rogers. John Farnham's '**You're The Voice**' is now synonymous with Ball and Boe and the crowd were in top voice! '**The Greatest Show**' from *The Greatest Showman* really is a fantastic party song and appropriate with the new Disney version of the musical due to open at the Bristol Hippodrome in Spring 2026.

We were then treated to a fantastic *Les Misérables* section to the show. Whilst the band played a fantastic medley of the key songs from 'Les Mis' a montage of photos of Michael and Alfie's history with the show was displayed on the back screen. For the first time ever Michael and Alfie duetted a

stunning performance of '**Empty Chairs at Empty Tables**' before Michael sang '**Stars**' and Alfie sang '**Bring Him Home**' with a well deserved standing ovation given to both.

It was time to end the concert with the Take That classic '**Rule the World**' which saw the O2 arena beautifully lit up with light from the torches of different camera phones. Michael and Alfie left the stage before returning to perform '**Welcome Home**'. This song was written by a small American band actually called 'The Welcome Home' and the lyrics are beautiful, heartfelt and sentimental. What better way to close the concert than with a party so '**Viva Las Vegas**' was the perfect way to end the concert with Michael and Alfie firing the T-Shirt Cannon Launchers into the crowd!

Michael and Alfie left the stage to such an electric atmosphere after performing in my opinion their best Ball and Boe concert tour to date! I can't wait to see where the next 10 years takes Michael and Alfie 'Together'!

SET LIST

Solsbury Hill

Proud

Baker Street

A Thousand Years

Hero

You'll Be Back

He Lives In You

He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother

Ferry Cross The Mersey

Up Where We Belong

Homeward Bound

The Gambler

You're The Voice

The Greatest Show

Empty Chairs At Empty Tables

Stars (Michael)

Bring Him Home (Alfie)

Rule The World

Welcome Home

Viva Las Vegas



LES MIS DOWN UNDER by Megan Walters



My husband and I flew to Sydney to attend the first two performances of the *Les Miserable Arena Spectacular Tour* of Australia. The venue was the enormous ICC Theatre in Darling Harbour. I didn't expect that the first people we would see in the foyer would be Bev and her daughter Kim from Brisbane with Hilary from Canberra! It was lovely to have a chat and to share our excitement.

The show of course was fabulous. Michael's rendition of 'Stars and Javert's suicide are faultless in my opinion. Marina Prior did not perform; she had lost her voice, starting a trend that haunted the cast in Melbourne. Helen Walsh was terrific and a very funny Madame T.

On the second night I hadn't realised that it was Press Night. At the conclusion of the performance Sir Cameron McIntosh appeared onstage. He explained why Marina was absent and introduced some of the original cast from the 1987 Sydney production. They included Normie Row and Philip Quast much to my joy. The cast and guests performed an encore of 'One Day More'. when it came to Javert's part Michael stood aside and let Philip have the moment.

We returned to Melbourne to wait for the show to arrive there. I had tickets to three performances – two with Michael and

Alfie and one with Bradley Jaden and Killian Donnelly playing the parts of Javert and Jean Valjean. We were staying in Melbourne and had arranged to meet Hilary for lunch. Gary and I were walking down Southbank when I noticed two familiar figures walking towards us. It was Michael and Andrew we had a quick chat which was lovely. I didn't ask for a photo unfortunately, but I didn't want to delay Michael for too long.



At our first performance on Friday 16th Matt Lucas had to withdraw at interval. He said on 'X' that he had lost his voice. The Bishop and Fantine (Mary-Jean Caldwell was outstanding) were also being performed by covers. Marina was back and she was fabulous and clearly enjoying herself as Madame T. Michael and Alfie were superb of course. I had seen the staged performance in London at the Gielgud and I think their performances just get better – if that's possible!

On Saturday I saw the show twice, I went to the matinee to see Killian and Bradley. I enjoyed it a lot but not as much as B&B. Jac Yarrow as Marius became unwell during 'One Day More' I saw him leave the stage. A quick-thinking James D Gish as Enjolras sang the line "my place is here I fight with you"!

At the evening show which I attended with my daughter, the roles of Marius, Thenardier, the Bishop and Fantine were again all played by covers. This time straight after Alfie's 'Bring him Home' we had a show stop, for a member of the audience who needed medical attention! The Rod Laver Arena staff dealt very quickly with the situation and the show continued. At the curtain call Marina's dress got caught on some stage equipment. She ended up with an armful of unraveled frills and a big hug from Michael.



It was three very eventful shows in Melbourne. Altogether I was very lucky to see five performances. People may wonder why you book multiple shows. I know not everyone can afford to; but being live theatre, every show is different and the unexpected happens. Michael and Alfie shone at every performance. I am pleased that I also saw the other cast and the covers that I wouldn't have seen if I had only gone once.

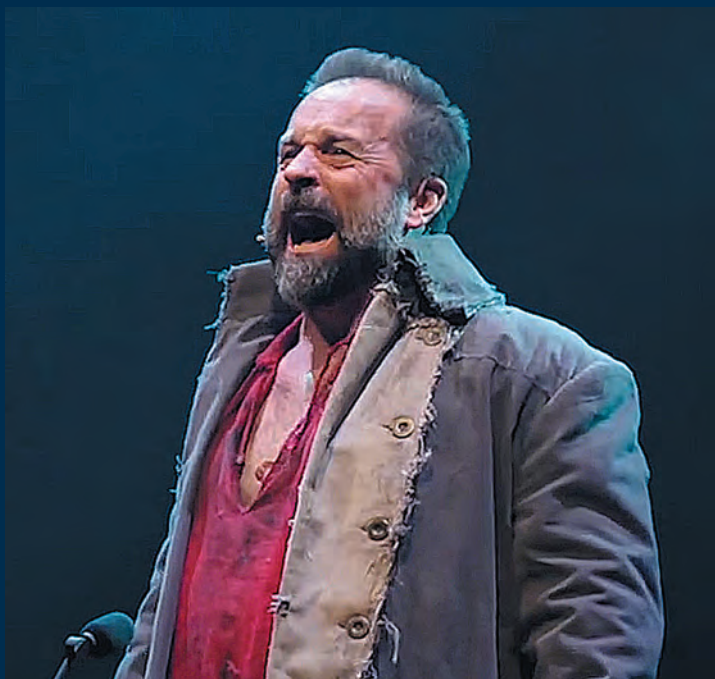




Photo: Julie Vidler

Together at home the best tour yet,
one I will never forget

Outstanding show right from start
Joyous, uplifting, it warmed the heart

Great songs a plenty that are home grown
Songs you love, making you think of home

Endless fun from the boys and
how they loved their cannon toys!

They really are a great double act,
they enrapture crowds and that's a fact

Hilarious and cheeky with witty remarks
When Michael said "Alfie's big Down Under" it made me laugh!

Extraordinary moment a beautiful sight
Take That and a venue of phone lights

Rapturous applause and a standing ovation
His version of 'Stars', the best in my estimation.

Alfie and Michael are just like brothers
A 10 year partnership like no other

Their amazing friendship and musical bond
Will last forever and grow ever strong

Here's to another great tour together
Many memories made that will stay forever.

Our love for you just grows and grows,
Thank you both for the spectacular shows

Michael, we hope you've had fun,
in Australia for the Les Mis run

Everyone wishes you the very best
Looking forward to whatever comes next!

by Julie Vidler



Photo: Julie Vidler

'TOGETHER AT HOME' WITH MUM

After another emotional tour watching Ball & Boe promoting the 'Together At Home' album, I am grateful to have been able to watch another show with my 86 old legend of a mum, Diana Morris. The joy Michael and Alfie provide with these concerts is unmatched and the love it brings is so precious!

Sian Rhiall



The winner of the most recent Fan Club Raffle was Shona Wright and she was delighted with her prizes!



THE MICHAEL BALL FAN CLUB ONLINE

www.mbfcc.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: **MBFC32**



