



# THEATRE & MUSICALS

AT 22 JERMYN STREET

*We are incredibly lucky at 22 to be so close to so many theatres in London and to have access to the very best plays, comedies, thrillers and musicals – most within a few minutes walk of the hotel.*

*Some only run for a short season, and many go on for a number of years, sometimes with numerous cast changes.*

*Don't miss the chance to sample such a variety of talent and entertainment on our own doorstep.*

*Our staff will secure your reservations, as well as arrange your restaurant bookings for before or after your theatrical treat.*

## THEATRE

For writers, the great American fuck-up is nearly as powerful a myth as the great American dream. Tony-winning playwright Richard Greenberg's **THREE DAYS OF RAIN** is an atmospheric three-hander, opening in a derelict loft-space in '90s Manhattan where three recently bereaved Generation X-ers try to decipher the secret of their dead dads' award-winning architectural partnership from the enigmatic diary entry of the play's title. Starring Nigel Harman, James McAvoy and Lindsey Marshall (*Apollo Shaftesbury*).

The stage adaptation of Gardner McKay's best-selling psychological thriller **TOYER** stars Al Weaver and Alice Krige (at the newly reopened *Arts Theatre*).

Andrew O'Hagan's **BE NEAR ME**, adapted for the stage by and starring Ian McDiarmid, is, on the face of it, a pretty triumphant affair. The stylish production combines fine acting with nicely judged theatricality, rousing sectarian song singing and impressionist lighting, but the script looks to be a rich, intelligent mixture of political thesis, social commentary and moral inquiry, examined through the filter of a personal tragedy (*until Mar 14<sup>th</sup>, Donmar Warehouse*).

Arthur Miller's play **A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE**, directed by Lindsay Posner, is a Greek tragedy foretold by narrating neighbourhood lawyer Alfieri, the embodiment of a legal code struggling to hold primal human passions in check. It's almost too big for the stage, just as the outsize emotions unleashed by the arrival of two illegal Sicilian workers prove too big for Eddie Carbone's claustrophobic apartment. Eddie is played by Ken Stott (*until May 16<sup>th</sup>, Duke of York's*).

Alan Bennett's play **ENJOY**, directed by Christopher Luscombe is Bennett's rarely performed dark comedy about an elderly couple who are observed by a scientologist (*until May 2<sup>nd</sup>, Gielgud*).

The 1985 play **WOMAN IN MIND**, written and directed by Alan Ayckbourn, begins like one of his tip-top sitcoms. The men are 100% nerd and come complete with a bric-a-brac of kitsch suburban obsessions. It looks through Susan's slightly glazed eyes and you don't know whether to laugh or to sigh at the contrast between the dull tragedy of her real life and her increasingly reckless fantasies (*Vaudeville*).

In this stage version of John Buchan's **THE 39 STEPS**, adaptor Patrick Barlow continues Hitchcock's tradition of mucking around with Buchan's original, keeping the love interest and adding a whirligig of self-conscious theatrical effects. The 4 actors play a minimum of 150 roles, evoking everyone from lingerie salesmen to a housekeeper who screams like a steam train (*Criterion*).

Steven Berkoff returns with a new adaptation of **ON THE WATERFRONT** (the Academy Award-winning film about a boxer who takes on the mob). It's adapted by Budd Schulberg and Stan Silverman (*until Apr 25, Theatre Royal, Haymarket*).

Susan Hill's **THE WOMAN IN BLACK** is a truly nerve-shredding experience. Now in its 20<sup>th</sup> "terrifying" year, it's a vintage thriller to cherish, starring Sean Baker and Ben Porter - a man tries to exorcise the horrors that haunt him – adapted by Stephen Mallatratt (*Fortune's*).

Michael Grandage's production of William Shakespeare's **TWELFTH NIGHT**, enjoys mocking those in love, in particular Mark Bonnar's Orsino, who is in so deep he can hardly drag himself out of bed, let alone get dressed. In fetching beach attire, Olivia stretches out on her towel and begs Viola to join her. As Olivia's steward, Derek Jacobi is an imposing joy. He's magnificently austere to begin with, but later becomes as disinhibited as a teetotaler, sipping on sherry at a Christmas party (*until May 7, Wyndhams*).

## MUSICALS

Currently the hottest ticket in town the famous Lionel Bart show **OLIVER !** adapted by Sam Mendes, who adds a twist to the old show. Impresario Cameron Mackintosh chose Rowan Atkinson to pick a pocket or two as Fagin. Anthony Ward's spectacular designs, with platforms rising up to take us down to Fagin's den, and dark alleys opening up to glorious vistas of St Paul's, are picture-postcard-perfect until Paule Constable's superb lighting conjures a smokiness and moodiness Whistler would have wanted to paint (*Theatre Royal, Drury Lane*).

The small-scale revival of **SUNSET BOULEVARD**, with music by Andrew Lloyd Weber; book and lyrics by Don Black and Christopher Hampton, seems to be a distinct improvement on the original, starring Kathryn Evans and Dave Willets (*Comedy*).

Stephen Clark's **ZORRO**, directed by Christopher Renshaw, designed by Tom Piper and choreographed by Rafael Amargo stars Matt Rawle and Emma Williams. It's a swashbuckling tale of a Spanish hero, set against the music of Flamenco group the Gypsy Kings. This new musical retells the dramatic tale of a romantic hero with extraordinary aerial acrobatics, spectacular sword-fighting and incredible magic (*Garrick*).

The classic camp musical **LA CAGE AUX FOLLES** is about cabaret club owner Georges and his leading drag artiste and lover Albin, whose idyllic existence is threatened when Georges's son from a previous relationship announces his engagement to the daughter of a staunchly right-wing politician. It's a timeless and deliciously funny tale of family values, unconditional love and, above all, the need to be proud of who we are. Jerry Herman's score includes songs such as *The Best Of Times*, *Song On The Sand* and the anthem *I Am What I Am*, which has been recorded by artists including Gloria Gaynor and Shirley Bassey. Douglas Hodge reprises his performance as Albin (with stature more Dame Edna than Danny la Rue), and Denis Lawson plays the dapper, bouffant-haired Georges (*Playhouse*).

Rodgers and Hammerstein's bittersweet musical **CAROUSEL** is about missed life-chances in a 1870s New England Village. The climactic scene, where Jeremiah James's emotionally disturbed barker, Billy Bigelow, returns from Heaven's "waiting-room" for one last day on earth, strikes notes of overwhelming pathos. Carousel conveys a painful sense of the "might have been" for Bigelow and the wife and daughter he left behind, had they all not been victims of precarious, economic times – starring Lesley Garrett, Jeremiah James, Graham MacDuff, Lauren Hood and Alexandra Silber (*Savoy*).

**THE JERSEY BOYS**, written by Marshall Brickman and Rick Ellis is the legendary story of a group of working class boys from the wrong side of the tracks who became one of the biggest pop music phenomenons of all time - Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons. This is a rags-to-rock-to-riches tale of four blue-collar kids working their way from the streets of Newark to the heights of stardom (*Prince Edward Theatre*).

It's an exuberant mix of mirth and girth in the award winning new stage musical **HAIRSPRAY**. Michael Ball (who steps into the fatsuit of Edna Turnblad – played by John Travolta in the recent screen version) stars with Nigel Planer, Leanne Jones, Ben James-Ellis as well as *Emmerdale* actress Verity Rushworth. Cory Collins is the host of the eponymous TV rock show where black and white mix it up somewhat with Big Mama Motormouth Maybelle. The vicious Von Tussies (mother and daughter) try to stop the show's teen heroine from bringing fun and integration to Baltimore circa 1962. There's not much of a story : big girl, big hair, big heart, lots of dancing, racial tension, more dancing and they all live happily ever after (that kind of thing) but it's a feelgood show of the most enjoyable kind (*Shaftesbury*).

The much-hyped theatrical extravaganza **THRILLER LIVE**, directed and choreographed by Gary Lloyd, has now opened, giving an exuberant blast to the West End. It features the songs of the "undisputed King of pop" Michael Jackson and the Jackson 5 (*Lyric*)

**JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT** is still a great show for its target audience, combining a Sunday school morality tale with multicolour theme and easy-to-repeat tunes. It's a reminder of how talented are Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber – currently starring Lee Mead as Joseph (*Adelphi*).

Stephen Daldry directs **BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL**, with music by Elton John. It's a funny, heart-warming and feel-good celebration of a young boy in a macho northern mining town who becomes enthralled by dance and struggles to be allowed to take ballet lessons – it's the winner of the 8 Best Musical Awards (*Victoria Palace*).

**DIRTY DANCING** – The Classic Story on Stage written by Eleanor Bergstein is about the Housemans who take a vacation at a holiday camp where their youngest daughter 'Baby' falls for Johnny, a dance teacher from the wrong side of the tracks, played by snake-hipped Australian Josef Brown (*Aldwych*).

Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel explained how a misunderstood, green girl named Elphaba became 'wicked' but her unlikely friend, Glinda, became 'good'. **WICKED** transports you to a fantasyland of wizardry and witchcraft with Grammy Award-winning music, Tony Award-winning sets and costumes, and stunning special effects – with Alexia Khadine (*Apollo, Victoria*).

**AVENUE Q** is an adult spoof about Princeton, where a bright-eyed college graduate makes some weird and wonderful friends during his encounters in the big city (*Noël Coward*).

In scruffy mechanics' gear, the 12-strong cast of **STOMP** smack, stomp and shuffle their way through bewilderingly inventive percussion set pieces, with tight choreography and unforced enthusiasm. Created by Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas (*Ambassador*).

Ludicrously camp, but immensely enjoyable, **MAMMA MIA!** is based on the songs of ABBA, from Angelo to Waterloo, music and lyrics by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvae. The playwright Catherine Johnson has knitted together a story about romance new and old on a Greek island, where an English mother is about to marry off her daughter (*Prince of Wales*).

Based on a 1926 play by Chicago Tribune reporter Maurine Dallas Watkins, Kander, Ebb and Fosse's murder musical **CHICAGO**, now in its 10th year, tells the story of Roxie Hart, a chorus girl who murders her unfaithful husband, then manages not only to avoid prison with the help of razzle-dazzle lawyer Billy Flynn. Flynn uses the trial to propel herself to showbiz stardom along with another murderous chorus girl, Velma Kelly. A dark parable of American justice, this is a sexy musical extravaganza that includes several show-stopping numbers such as *All That Jazz*, *Razzle-Dazzle* and *Class* (*Cambridge*).

Disney presents an astonishing triumph of theatrical imagination with **THE LION KING**, which roared into town on a £6.5m budget, with songs by Tim Rice and Elton John and authentic savannah rhythms from South African composer Lebo M – this is a real "must see". There's nothing subtle about it. The lurid colours and costumes would make a rainbow feel monochrome, but Simba's flight, and then his return to his rightful destiny as king of the pride is your archetypal adventure yarn, hardwired to strike a cord in all of us (*Lyceum*).

Queen joined forces with the writer Ben Elton in creating **WE WILL ROCK YOU**, directed by Christopher Renshaw and choreographed by Arlene Phillips. The musical incorporates songs by Queen, and is set in the future when globalization is complete and live music has been banned (*Dominion*).

### **STILL RUNNING !!!**

Victor Hugo's great humanitarian epic tale of misery and deprivation in revolutionary France, the Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg musical **LES MISERABLES** is the world's longest running musical and turned 21 last Autumn (*Queen's*). Andrew Lloyd Webber's **PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**, directed by Harold Prince, is a ravishingly lavish hit musical of gothic life and love beneath the stage at the Paris Opera House (*Her Majesty's*). Now in its 19th anniversary year, Willy Russell's award winning **BLOOD BROTHERS** brings the audience to its feet—about a mother who is forced to give up one of her twin sons, however, their paths are destined to cross again (*Phoenix*).

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