



THE
STAFFORD
LONDON
EST 1912

ASK ALAN... WHAT'S ON STAGE

The best-selling and most anticipated new shows



"OLD FRIENDS" Gielgud Theatre

After Stephen Sondheim's death in 2021, Cameron Mackintosh produced a one-off gala performance last year to celebrate Sondheim's greatest works. Now, the concert is back for a full season at the Gielgud Theatre. A host of big musical stars, including Bernadette Peters and Lea Salonga sparkle their way through songs from his best shows, including Sweeney Todd, Gypsy, and West Side Story. If you enjoy Sondheim's work, you will be in seventh heaven from the moment the curtain goes up. It's very special!

"LYONESSE" Harold Pinter Theatre

You know a new play is going to be good when you hear of the talents involved. Two great actresses – Kristen Scott Thomas and Lily James – are directed by Ian Rickson, who was instrumental in the success of 'Jerusalem'. It's about a talented actress who mysteriously disappears. 30 years later she's ready to tell all, so summons a young film executive to manage her triumphant return. Funny and heartfelt; but also thought-provoking: who controls the stories we tell? Do we ever get the truth or just a manipulated version of it?

"CRAZY FOR YOU" Gillian Lynne Theatre

Advanced warning: many superlatives used in this review! Charlie Stemp has really matured to become a true star of musical theatre. He plays Bobby, the Banker with a heart of gold, sent to foreclose on a small town theatre - he is sensational. His dancing, from smooth waltz to frenzied tap, is sublime; and his Norman Wisdom style goofball comedy is brilliant. Indeed the whole production is magnificent: a feast of infectious melodies, fabulous dancing, and irresistible comedy. Musicals don't get much better than this...

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16-18 St James's Place London SW1A 1NJ United Kingdom
T +44 (0)20 7493 0111 E concierge@thestaffordlondon.com

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"BACKSTAIRS BILLY"

Duke of York's Theatre

A juicy new comedy, set in 1979, and starring Penelope Wilton as the Queen Mother and Luke Evans as William Tallon (Backstairs Billy), her devoted servant for 51 years. Billy was brilliant, naughty and charming. He made the Queen Mother's life much more entertaining, because he enjoyed the 'theatrical' side of life, which she found very amusing. The play is a breath of fresh air.

There's nothing too deep or serious to be concerned about, no hidden meanings or heavy philosophical undertones. Just a really good laugh. Go on, enjoy!

"A CHRISTMAS CAROL"

The Old Vic Theatre

The Old Vic Theatre is transformed for this beautifully retold classic. Mince pies for the audience and what seems like actual gently falling snow contribute to the special atmosphere. Music plays a large part in the production, with carols and hymns sung and played on handbells and penny whistles by the ensemble. You just can't resist its charms. Scrooge's rebirth as a caring human after all, is utterly joyful and genuinely moving.

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