

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN (4th Revival)

London run: Palace, Feb 15th, - June 8th, 2013

Music: Nacio Herb Brown & others

Lyrics: Arthur Freed & others

Book: Betty Comden and Adolph Green

Director: Jonathan Church

Choreographer: Andrew Wright

Musical Director: Robert Scott

Producer: Chichester Festival Theatre
& Stage Entertainment UK

Cast: Adam Cooper (*Don Lockwood*),
Daniel Crossley (*Cosmo Brown*),
Scarlett Strallen (*Kathy Selden*),
Katherine Kingsley (*Lina Lamont*),

Peter Forbes (*Roscoe Dexter*),
Sandra Dickinson,
Michael Brandon, David Lucas



Photo by Alastair Muir

Adam Cooper

Notes: This show originated at the Chichester Festival Theatre in 2011, where it received ecstatic five-star notices from almost everyone who saw it. It opened in the West End to equally good notices. Adam Cooper (the original swan in Matthew Bourne's all-male "Swan Lake") had played this role eight years earlier in a Leicester Haymarket production at Sadler's Wells – a production which he also choreographed. This time it was a completely new production with Andrew Wright as choreographer. Cast replacements during the run included Jennifer Ellison as Lina Lamont, Stephan Aneli as Cosmo, and Louise Bowden as Kathy.

See Original London run: London Palladium, June 1983

First revival: London Palladium, June 1989

Second revival: Olivier Theatre, June & December 2000

Third revival: Sadler's Wells, August 2004

FLOYD COLLINS (1st Revival)

London run: Southwark Playhouse, February 28th – March 31st

Music & Lyrics: Adam Guettel

Book: Tina Landau

Director: Derek Bond

Choreographer: Richard Jones

Musical Director: Tim Jackson

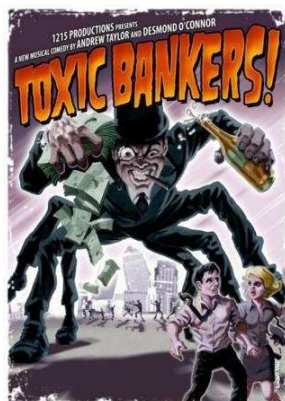
Cast: Glenn Carter (*Floyd Collins*), Robyn North (*Nellie Collins*), Gareth Chart (*Homer Collins*),
Ryan Sampson (*Skeets Miller*), Kit Benjamin (*H.T. Carmichael*), Mensah Bediako, Morgan Deare, Dayle Hodge,
Roddy Peters, Donovan Preston, Jonathan Redfern, Jane Webster



Photo by Tristram Kenton

The railway-arch space was a perfect background for the claustrophobic designs of an underground cavern where Floyd Collins is trapped, and the designer (James Perkins) was much praised. Similar praise was given to the eight-piece band, playing guitar, banjo, harmonica, strings, percussion and keyboard and blending "bluegrass and ragtime with the jagged atonality of Sondheim and the grandeur of Copland" (Times). However, once again the show itself received a mixed reaction: for some it is too long and too static, for others it is a haunting, powerful, relevant and important modern musical.

Original London run: Bridewell, July 1999



TOXIC BANKERS

London run: Leicester Square Theatre, March 7th – April 14th

Music & Lyrics: Andrew Taylor & Desmond O'Connor

Director: Andrew Taylor

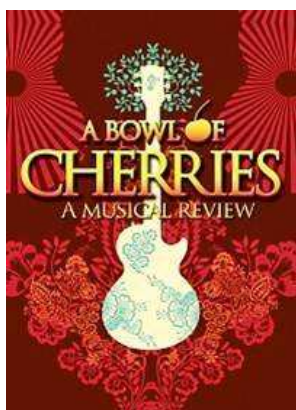
Musical Director: Desmond O'Connor

Cast: Jonathan Dryden Taylor (*Tony*), Hazel Gardner (*Fiona*), Donna Hughes (*Helen*), Stuart Saint (*Joe*), Kimberley Eyles (*Susanna*), Andrew Mudie (*Chris*), Nigel Thomas

Story: “A hedge fund... with heart and soul,” is the motto of SMS Ethical Investments which claims to be reinventing ethical banking. Its boss, Tony, claims to make profits without compromising his clients’ integrity. However, Fiona, an office junior, is the only one aware of her employer’s dubious ethics. The

middle-managers, Helen and the gay coke-head Joe, are only interested in their pay cheques and bonuses. Tony further motivates his team by hiring Susanna and Chris from the concierge firm, Personal Liberty, to organise the lives of his staff. Things start to go wrong when Susanna starts servicing Joe’s boyfriend, and Fiona starts falling for Chris. And things get worse when the Greek economy collapses and Tony buys up most of Greece, Portugal, Spain and Italy, Fiona uncovers a scam and anti-capitalists infiltrate the firm and threaten to bring down the entire organisation.

Notes: Ethical Capitalism, an oxymoron at the best of times, would be an excellent target for satire, but despite some good tunes and witty lyrics, it was generally felt to be too diffuse in its targets. However, it raised a lot of timely laughs.



A BOWL OF CHERRIES

London run: Charing Cross, March 8th – 31st

Music & Lyrics: David Martin

Book: Carolyn Pertwee

Devised by: Andrew C. Wadsworth

Director: Andrew C. Wadsworth

Choreographer: Alistair David

Musical Director: Tom Kelly

Cast: Clare Buckfield (*Penny Riddle*), Graham MacDuff (*Albert Farthing*), Julie Jupp, Kate Graham, Sohm Kapila, Gary Wilmot, Paul Manuel, Eaton James

Story: Penny Riddle and Albert Farthing are two 1940s theatre ghosts, haunting a run-down theatre where a modern-day musical revue is being performed. Penny

won’t accept that she’s dead, and still dreams of stardom. Albert was a stagehand, besotted with Penny, and died trying to rescue her when the theatre was bombed in the Blitz. Because she refuses to leave the theatre, they are both stranded in an afterlife. Their ghostly presence observes a revue about life – scenes of youthful passion, marital and midlife crisis, bereavement and old age.

Notes: As in the phrase “Life is just a bowl of cherries”, the scenes and songs were intended to illustrate different aspects of life’s bitter-sweet experiences and take the audience on a journey from the cradle to infinity. The songs were by the Novello Award-winning David Martin, who wrote the Barry Manilow hit “Can’t Smile Without You”. However, the framework of the ghosts didn’t make much sense, and the bitty, random scenes lacked any real cohesion. In spite of its top-quality cast, it was roundly condemned by the majority of critics.

Clare Buckfield & Graham MacDuff



Photo by Elliott Franks

THE GLORIOUS ONES

London run: Landor, March 12th – April 7th

Music: Stephen Flaherty

Lyrics & Book: Lynn Ahrens

Director: Robert McWhir

Choreographer: Robbie O'Reilly

Musical Director: David Randall

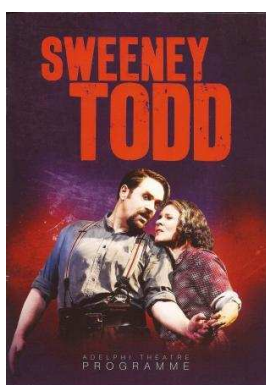
Cast: Mike Christie (*Flaminio Scala*), Kate Brennan (*Columbina*), Jodie Beth Meyer (*Armanda*), Peter Straker (*Pantalone*), David Muscat (*Dottore*), Anouska Eaton (*Isabella*), Christopher Berry (*Francesco*)



Songs: The Glorious Ones, Making Love, Pantalone Alone, The Comedy of Love, Madness to Act, Absalom, The Invitation to France, The World She Writes, Opposite You, My Body Wasn't Why, Rise and Fall, The Moon Woman, Armanda's Sack.

Story: Set in 17th-century Italy, it concerns a theatre group in the world of Commedia dell'Arte led by the rascal Flaminio Scala and his lover, the ex-courtesan Columbina. They are determined to succeed with their rough-and-ready antics involving melodrama, slapstick, improvisation and a lot of bawdy gags. Their troupe includes the dim and diminutive Armanda, the lovelorn Pantalone, a doddering Dottore, and Isabella and Francesco, a pair of idealistic young lovers. Their revolutionary new ideas about the nature of theatre have a seismic effect on the company when they lose their royal patronage following a disastrous visit to the French court which leaves Henri III less than amused.

Notes: Based on the novel by Francine Prose, this musical was given a three-week try-out in Pittsburgh in April 2007, and then opened off-Broadway as a production of the Lincoln Center Theatre in October and running until the first week of January 2008. It received five Drama Desk Award nominations. This was its UK premiere.



SWEENEY TODD (9th Revival)

London run: Adelphi, March 20th - September 22nd

Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

Book: Hugh Wheeler

Director: Jonathan Kent

Choreographer: Denni Sayers

Musical Director: Nicholas Skilbeck

Cast: Michael Ball (*Sweeney Todd*), Imelda Staunton (*Mrs Lovett*), Luke Brady (*Anthony*), John Bowe (*Judge Turpin*), Lucy May Barker (*Johanna*), James McConville (*Tobias*), Robert Burt (*Pirelli*), Gillian Kirkpatrick (*Beggar Woman*), Peter Polycarpou (*Beadle*), Simeon Truby, Wendy Somerville, Tim Morgan, Robert Irons, Emily Bull, Will Barratt, Daniel Graham, Robert Traynor

This production opened at the Chichester Festival Theatre on September 24th 2011. It had updated the action to the 1930s – and several critics felt this was a mistake. However, there was unanimous praise for almost everything else: Michael Ball and Imelda Staunton both received rave notices – felt by many to be the best ever pairing in these roles. This was a magnificent triumph for all concerned, winning Olivier Awards for both the leads and as Best Musical Revival.

- See Original London production:
 Drury Lane Theatre, July 1980
 1st revival: Half Moon Theatre, May 1985;
 2nd revival: Cottesloe June /Lyttleton Dec 1993
 3rd revival: Holland Park, June 1996;
 4th revival: Sadler's Wells, June 2002
 5th revival: Royal Opera House, Dec 2003;
 6th revival: Trafalgar Studios July 2004
 7th revival: Royal Festival Hall, July 2007;
 8th revival: Union, November, 2008

Imelda Staunton & Michael Ball



Photo by Jonathan Hordle

ASSASSINS (4th Revival)

London run: Pleasance,
March 22nd – April 7th

Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

Book: John Weidman

Director: Ray Rackham

Choreographer: Chris Whittaker

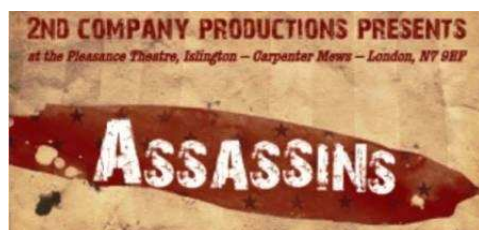
Musical Director: Joe Bunker

Cast: Alexander Forsyth (*Leon Czolgosz*),
Bo Frazier (*John Hinckley*),
Brandon Force (*Charles Guiteau*),
Padraig Breathnach (*Giuseppe Zangara*),
Tim McArthur (*Samuel Byck*),
Marcia Brown (*Squeaky Fromme*),
Bronwyn Baud (*Sara Jane Moore*),
Martin Dickinson (*John Wilkes Booth*),
Johnjo Flynn (*Balladeer/Lee Harvey Oswald*),
Nova Skipp (*Emma Goldman*), David Shorter,
Mark Philip Compton, Gary Mannion, Aideen McCartney, Angela Nesi .



Johnjo Flynn (Centre) as Lee Harvey Oswald

Photo by Francis Loney



This was felt to be a somewhat under-powered revival both in direction, performance and from the six-piece band. However, the work itself still had a powerful impact. It was the second Sondheim show to open in London in three days.

Original London run: Donmar Warehouse, October 1992

1st revival: New End Theatre, July 1997;

2nd revival: Landor, Sep, 2000; 3rd revival: Union, 2010

THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD (3rd Revival)

London run: Landor, April 11th – May 5th

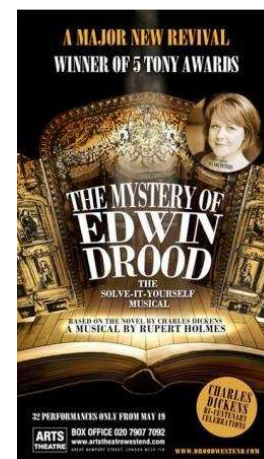
Transfer: Arts Theatre, May 22nd – June 17th

Music & Lyrics: Rupert Holmes

Director: Matthew Gould

Musical Director: James Cleeve

Cast: Denis Delahunt (*Chairman*), Wendi Peters (*Princess Puffer*),
Natalie Day (*Edwin Drood*), Daniel Robinson (*John Jasper*),
Victoria Farley (*Rosa Budd*), Loula Geater, David Francis, Richard Stirling,
Oliver Mawdsley, Christopher Coleman, Paul Hutton, Tom Pepper, Ben Goffe,
Chloe Akam, Ralph Bogard.



Heralded as a contribution to the 200th Anniversary celebrations of the birth of Charles Dickens, this revival starred the Coronation Street actress Wendi Peters as Princess Puffer. Her performance was much praised, and her presence in the cast was one of the reasons why this fringe production transferred to the Arts Theatre.

Original London production:

Savoy Theatre, May 1987

1st revival: Bridewell Theatre, Aug 2003

2nd revival: Warehouse, Croydon, Dec 2007

Photo by Mitzi de Margary



Michael Howe & Jonathan Ansell

A TALE OF TWO CITIES (1st Revival)

London run: Charing Cross Theatre,
April 18th – May 12th

Music: David Pomeranz

Lyrics: Steven David Horwich

Book: Steven David Horwich & David Soames

Director: Paul Nicholas

Choreographer: Racky Plews

Musical Director: John Cameron

Cast: Jonathan Ansell/Antony Hansen (*Darnay*),
Michael Howe (*Sidney Carton*),
Jennifer Hepburn (*Lucie Manette*),
Christopher Gilling (*Marquis St Evremonde*),
Tom Murphy (*Gabelle*),
Craig Berry (*Monsieur Defarge*),

Jemma Alexander (*Madame Defarge*), John Fleming (*Dr Manette*), Miles Eagling, David Alder, Pippa Winslow, Mark Slowey, Neil Canfer, Rebecca Wickling, Matt Stevens.

This revival was very much the same production (and production team) that had staged the original four years earlier at the Gatehouse, and even included a few of the original cast members. Since 2012 is the Dickens' Bicentenary Year it was considered a fitting revival, although "It's an old-fashioned period costume musical that grafts a modern pop score on to an old story to feel like an inferior version of *Les Miserables*" (S. Express)

Original London run: Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Sept 2008

SOUL SISTER

London run: Hackney Empire, April 19th – May 5th

Transfer to Savoy, Aug 23rd – Sep 29th (Limited season)

Music & Lyrics: Various

Book: Pete Brooks & John Miller

Director: Bob Eaton (& Pete Brooks for Savoy transfer)

Choreographer: Jason Pennycooke
(& Carol Todd for Savoy Transfer)

Musical Director: Sean Green

Cast: Emi Wokoma (*Tina Turner*),
Chris Tummings (*Ike Turner*),
Sharon Benson (*Rhoma/Alleen*), Ngo Ngofga, Joanne Sandi,
Ria Horsford, Sean Green

Songs: What's Love Got To Do With It, Simply The Best,
Proud Mary, Private Dancer, River Deep Mountain High,
Respect, A Fool in Love, Honky Tonk Woman, Steamy
Windows



Emi Wokoma & Chris Tummings

Photo by Elliot Franks

Story: In 1956 in St Louis, Anna Mae Bullock, aged just 17, in her Sunday-best coat and ankle socks, auditions for band-leader Ike Turner, who immediately recognises this superbly voiced girl can make him a fortune. And so begins a 20 year story with Anna Mae renamed Tina, and soon married to Ike Turner, becoming a highly successful, hard-touring show business outfit. In a country still beset with racial segregation and a growing Civil Rights movement, Ike and Tina Turner work their way to the top, as their special brand of powerful rock 'n' soul is recognised by the white world. But there is a price to pay – a disastrous marriage to a violent and abusive Ike. She finally leaves him and enters a period in a professional wilderness, but in 1985 makes a brilliant solo comeback with a number of hugely popular hits.

Notes: Influenced by the 1993 bio-pic "What's Love Got to Do With It?", this was a jukebox musical staged with video projections and screened images, and, at heart, more of a tribute concert than a musical. However, an astonishingly powerful central performance from Emi Wokoma as Tina Turner lifted this well above the ordinary, and made it an outstanding theatrical evening. Some alterations were made for the transfer to Savoy, including adding Pete Brooks and Carol Todd to the directing and choreography credits, and Rochelle Neil replaced Sharon Benson at the Savoy)

TOP HAT

London run: Aldwych, May 9th - October 26th, 2013

Music & Lyrics: Irving Berlin

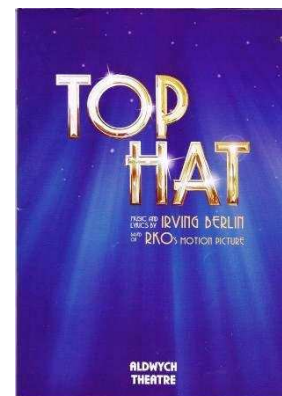
Book: Matthew White & Howard Jacques

Director: Matthew White

Choreographer: Bill Deamer

Musical Director: Dan Jackson

Cast: Tom Chambers (*Jerry Travers*), Summer Strallen (*Dale Tremont*), Martin Ball (*Horace Hardwick*), Vivien Parry (*Madge Hardwick*), Stephen Boswell (*Bates*), Ricardo Afonso (*Alberto Beddini*), Alan Burkitt, Alexandra Waite-Robets, Paul Kemble, Kay Murphy, Russell-Leighton-Dixon, John Stacey



Songs: Putting on the Ritz, No Strings, I'm Putting all my Eggs in One Basket, Isn't This a Lovely Day?, You're Easy to Dance With, Top Hat White Tie and Tails, The Piccolino, Wild About You, Cheek to Cheek, Better Luck Next Time, Latins Know How, Let's Face the Music and Dance, Outside of That I Love You.

Story: Jerry Travers is a fabled Broadway star about to open in a big London show. He is rehearsing in the hotel room of his rich English producer Horace Hardwick and Madge, Horace's real Bronx toughie wife. Jerry's tap-dancing annoys swish model Dale Tremont, the occupant of the room underneath. Not knowing who he is, she comes to complain, and, of course, he falls in love with her. But in a case of mistaken identity, Dale comes to believe Jerry is actually Mr Hardwick and already married, and thus the course of true love goes awry! With Bates, a disguise-loving butler, and Alberto, a preening Italian stallion, to complicate the plot, all is a whirl of confusion until, of course, a happy ending!

Notes: The 1935 RKO musical film starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers was adapted into a stage musical and began a UK tour at Milton Keynes in August 2011. The production transferred to the West End, with previews from April 19th 2012. One or two critics grudgingly complained about the lack of plot and purpose, but generally the show was very well received – "Sacrilege it may be, but I actually think this "Top Hat" is even more impressive than the film. . . A musical like this comes around once in a lifetime!" (Sunday Telegraph). It won the Olivier Award for the Best New Musical.



Photo by Brinkhoff & Mogenburg

Tom Chambers & Summer Strallen

FLAHOOLEY

London run: Lilian Baylis, May 13th – June 3rd (4 successive Sundays)

Music: Sammy Fain

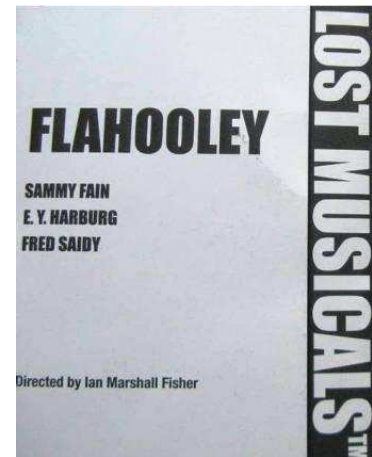
Book & Lyrics: E.Y. Harburg & Fred Saidy

Director: Ian Marshall Fisher

Musical Director: Mark Warman

Producer: Lost Musicals Season

Cast: Matt Zimmerman (*B.G. Bigelow*),
Michelle Whitney (*Flahooley*),
James Irving (*Sylvester*),
Emily O’Keeffe (*Sandy*),
Margaret Preece (*Princess Najila*),
Stewart Permutt (*Abou Ben Atom*),
Myra Sands (*Elsa Bundschlager*),
James Vaughan, Valerie Cutko



Songs: You Too Can Be a Puppet, Happy Hunting, Here’s to Your Illusions, Who Says There Ain’t No Santa Claus?, The World is Your Balloon, He’s Only Wonderful, Arabian for Get Happy, Spirit of Capsulanti, Scheherazade, Come Back Little Genie, The Springtime Cometh.

(*Extra songs written by Mosises Vivanco: Birds/Enchantment, Najila’s Lament/ Najila’s Song of Joy*)

Story: B.G. Bigelow’s toy factory in Capsulanti USA is about to launch its world-beating new product - Flahooley, a laughing doll, created by Sylvester, the company’s puppet designer. Sylvester hopes to make a lot of money from this and thus marry his beloved Sandy. The launch is interrupted by a delegation from Arabia, headed by the Princess Najila. Their country has run out of oil because the magic lamp upon which they rely is broken, and they hope Sylvester can repair it. If so, Abou Ben Atom, the Genie of the Lamp, can once more be summoned and keep the oil flowing. Sylvester manages to repair the lamp, but meantime a rival company (thanks to industrial espionage) has produced its own version of Flahooley and is producing a cheaper version. Sylvester asks Abou Ben Atom for help, but the Genie doesn’t understand how capitalism works, and magics up Flahooleys in such large numbers that the market is saturated. Faced with financial ruin the citizens of Capsulanti arrange a genie hunt, intending to burn every Flahooley they can find. The lamp is seized by Elsa Bundschlager, the leader of the mob, but Abou escapes and decides to become a Santa Claus, while Bigelow flies off on a magic carpet to marry the Arabian princess Najila.

Notes: Yip Harburg – who in 1947 had mixed politics with fantasy in “Finian’s Rainbow” – suffered a 1950 Hollywood blacklisting in Senator McCarthy’s Communist witch-hunt. In the original version of “Flahooley” the puppet instead of laughing cried “Dirty Red!”, and the final version was permeated with several bitter and thinly-veiled references to the rabid anti-Communist movement. The Broadway production opened in May 1951 and ran for just 40 performances. The original cast included Barbara Cook in her Broadway debut, and included some songs especially written for the four-octave range of the “Peruvian” soprano Yma Sumac.

(In September 1952 a second version, much toned down, and renamed “Jollyanna”, closed during its pre-Broadway tryouts. An off-Broadway revival had some success in September 1998, and the show received its second off-Broadway revival in December 2009.

In the 2009 revival Ben Harburg, grandson of Yip Harburg, played Clyde, a puppet in the song “You Too Can Be a Puppet.”. This concert version performed as part of the Lost Musicals Season, was its British premiere.)

*Ben Harburg as the puppet Clyde
in the 2009
off-Broadway revival*

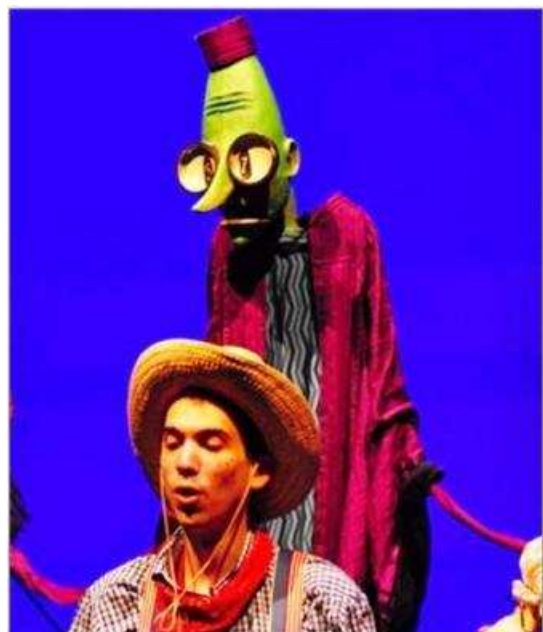


Photo by Tanja

JEKYLL AND HYDE

London run: Union, May 18th – June 16th

Music: Frank Wildhorn

Book & Lyrics: Leslie Bricusse

Director: Luke Fredericks

Musical Director: Dean Austin

Cast: Tim Rogers (*Jekyll/Hyde*), Joanna Strand (*Emma*), Mark Goldthorp (*John Utterson*), Paul Tate (*Bishop*), Michael Blore (*Sir Archibald*), Rodney Ward (*Lord Savage*), Andrea Miller (*Lady Beaconsfield*), Tim Benton (*General Glossop*), Mark Turnbull (*Sir Danvers Carew*), Anthony Lawrence (*Simon Stride*), Lydia Jenkins (*Nellie*), Madalena Alberto (*Lucy*)

Songs: (*Lyrics by Leslie Bricusse*) Lost in the Darkness, I Need to Know, Pursue the Truth, I Must Go On, Take Me as I Am, Letting Go, Bring on the Men, This is the Moment, Streak of Madness, In His Eyes, Dangerous Game, The Way Back. (*Lyrics by Steve Cuden & Leslie Bricusse*) Transformation, Alive, His Work And Nothing More, Murder, Murder, Once Upon A Dream.

Story: Convinced the cure for his father's mental illness lies in brain surgery to separate Man's evil nature from his good, Dr. Henry Jekyll's idea outrages the Governors of St Jude's Hospital. The Bishop of Basingstoke, Sir Archibald Proops, Lord Savage, Lady Beaconsfield and General Glossop all vote against the idea with cries of "sacrilege, lunacy, blasphemy, heresy". Sir Danvers Carew (Dr Jekyll's father-in-law to be) abstains. The Board Secretary, Simon Stride, warns Emma that her future husband has some "mad" ideas, but Emma agrees with her father that some good might come of Dr Jekyll's work.

Jekyll and his friend Utterson on the pre-wedding bachelor's party visit the notorious Red Rat Club, and are entertained by the owner, Nellie, and good-time girl Lucy, who inspires him to carry on with his experiments. As a result Jekyll unwittingly unleashes his own dark side, wreaking havoc in the streets of late 19th century London as his alter-ego, the savage, maniacal Edward Hyde, and kills many people, including the Governors and even poor Lucy. Finally, on his wedding day, Jekyll realises that he himself is the killer, as he turns into Hyde and kills a wedding guest. Horror-struck, he begs Utterson to kill him, but Utterson cannot commit the act, so Jekyll throws himself onto the sword and commits suicide.

Notes: Based on the Robert Louis Stevenson story, the original musical was written by Frank Wildhorn and Steve Cuden but failed to raise the finance for a production. The show underwent re-writing with a new set of songs and a new lyricist, Leslie Bricusse, and had a premiere and a concept album recording in 1990. It took another five years before it was staged again – this time opening in Houston, and then touring the USA from August 1995 to April 1996. One year later, April 28th 1997 the show finally opened on Broadway and closed on January 7th 2001 after 44 previews and 1,543 performances. Despite the long run, the musical lost more than \$1.5million, recovering just 75% of its \$7million overall costs.



The show had a number of world-wide productions through Europe, Japan and South Korea, but never made it to London's West End. A UK tour ran from August 2004 to May 2005 starring Paul Nicholas, Louise Dearman and Shona Lindsay. A second UK tour, produced by Bill Kenwright, ran from January – July 2011 with Marti Pellow, Sarah Earnshaw and Sabrina Carter.

This fringe-theatre production was its London premiere and was given with a five-piece band in a specially updated and revised version.

Tim Rogers as Dr Jekyll



THE HARD BOILED EGG AND THE WASP

London run: Lion & Unicorn, May 23rd – 10th June

Music & Lyrics: Andy Street & Jonathan Kydd

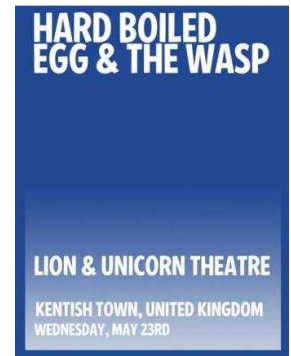
Director: Jonathan Kydd

Cast: Richard Albrecht (*Chairman*), Chris Vincent (*Dan Leno*), Claire Marlowe (*Lydia Leno*), Richard Foster King (*Victoria, Napoleon, etc.*), Paul Matania (*George Robey*), Philip Herbert (*Dawlish*), Alwayne Taylor (*Miss Cornthwaite*), Sarah Earnshaw (*Amelia Proudfoot*), Callum Coates

Songs: Clarinetting Kisser, Pineapple, Phineas Gage, The Bermondsey Butcher, Two Baths.

Story: A music-hall chairman tells the (completely fictionalised) story of Dan Leno, the Crown Prince of the Music Hall era, explaining how he has been confined to Camberwell Lunatic Asylum by his wife, Lydia. Fellow inmates include Queen Victoria, Napoleon, Catherine the Great and two men who think they're Jesus. There's even an appearance of a young rival, George Robey. Dan Leno is facing life-threatening brain surgery to cure him of his appalling headaches but maybe he's not mad; maybe he's just no longer funny. The asylum officials include the lobotomised hospital orderly, Dawlish, and the horsey Lesbian tyrant Miss Cornthwaite, who is determined to lure the young, gentle Amelia Proudfoot into her "Rose Garden".

Notes: This was a bit of a mess from the start. It was a combination of old time music hall and "Rocky Horror Show", which suddenly would turn into a serious study of mental illness and schizophrenia, then lurch into a consideration of Victorian sexual attitudes before resuming a kind of "Carry On in the Asylum" approach. Groaningly awful puns were followed by gender politics, and saucy sausage gags accompanied psychosexual musings. It was considered to be dramatically and musically incoherent.



RAGTIME (2nd Revival)

London run: Open Air, Regent's Park, May 28th – September 8th

Music: Stephen Flaherty

Lyrics: Lynn Ahrens

Book: Terrence McNally

Director: Timothy Sheader

Choreographer: Javier de Frutos

Musical Director: Nigel Lilley

Cast: Rosalie Craig (*Mother*), John Marquex (*Tateh*), David Birrell (*Father*), Rolan Bell (*Coalhouse*), Claudia Kariuki (*Sarah*), Carl Sanderson (*Henry Ford*), Stephane Anelli (*Houdini*), Anthony Clegg (*JP Morgan*), Tamsin Carroll (*Emma Goldman*), Katie Brayben (*Evelyn Nesbit*)

Notes: The Open Air Theatre's annual musical under Timothy Sheader had won Olivier Awards for the past three successive years, so there were great hopes for this revival. Just six months earlier a fringe production at the Landor had been much praised, and now came the chance to re-consider the work in the hands of acknowledged experts. However, the critical reaction was very muted. A dramatically updated design, including a huge ripped Obama poster, twisted Starbucks signs, a half buried Stars and Stripes and a battered Statue of Liberty, was felt to be a striking but ultimately damaging mistake. References to the Moon Landing, Martin Luther King and 9/11 all worked against the basic story of 1900s America: it was already a busy kaleidoscope of turn-of-the-century events, but by enlarging this story with later and even up-to-date references, and with a cast alternating between period and modern costumes, the whole evening became an impressive but confusing spectacle with very little soul.



Photo by Johan Persson

See original London production:
Piccadilly, March 2003
First revival: Landor, September 2011

WAH WAH GIRLS

London run: Peacock Theatre, May 31st – June 23rd

Photo by Tristram Kenton



Original Music: Niraj Chag
(and existing Bollywood songs)

Book & Lyrics: Tanika Gupta

Director: Emma Rice

Choreographer: Javed Sanad &

Gauri Sharma Tripathi

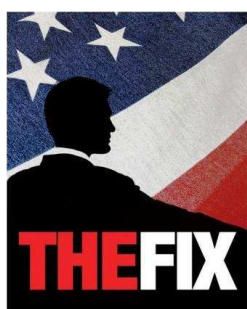
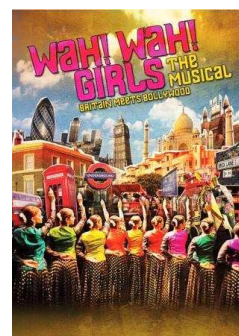
Musical Director: Niraj Chag

Cast: Rina Fatania (*Bindi*),
Rebecca Grant (*Sita*),
Sophiya Haque (*Soraya*),
Tariq Jordan (*Kabir*),
Philip Brodie (*Pavel*), Delroy Atkinson (*Cal*),
Tony Jayawardena (*Mansoor*),
Keeza Farhan (*Omar*)

Songs: Fear Has Big Eyes, I Love This Town,

Story: When Bindi's husband goes away for a few days he tells his wife not to spend all her time watching Bollywood movies. As soon as he disappears she naturally turns on the telly, and – lo and behold – the films she's watching suddenly move out of the screen, into her front room and into the streets of London's East End. Young Sita has run away from her controlling brother and goes to work in a dancing club run by Soraya, a former traditional mujra dancer. But Sita loves modern Bollywood dancing, not the traditional old-fashioned style of Soraya. At the club she falls in love with Soraya's son, Kabir. Other characters include the Polish plumber Pavel, the too-good-to-be-true builder Cal, and the grumpy grocer Mansoor.

Notes: This was a joint production between Sadler's Wells, the Theatre Royal Stratford and the Kneehigh Company from Cornwall. "Wah-Wah" (pronounced "Var-Var") is the Indian equivalent of "Bravo" and is called out by audiences instead of applauding. However, most of the critics found little to "wah-wah" about in this show. Its bland script, lip-synched songs, excruciating attempts to create multi-cultural relevance, and dreary production were all heavily criticised. On the other hand, everyone agreed that whenever the dancing started, these were enjoyable, praiseworthy and impressive interludes.



THE FIX (1st Revival)

London run: Union,
June 22nd – July 14th

Music: Dana P. Rowe

Book & Lyrics: John Dempsey

Director: Michael Strassen

Musical Director: Simon Lambert

Cast: Louis Maskell (*Cal Chandler*),
Liz May Brice (*Violet Chandler*),
Miles Western (*Grahame Chandler*),

Daisy Tonge (*Tina*), Donovan Preston, Leon Kay,
Daryl Armstrong, Will Pearce.

Notes: 2012 being an Election Year in the USA, this journey into the dark heart of American political life was felt to be worthy of a revival. There was universal praise for newcomer Louis Maskell.

Original London run: Donmar Warehouse, May 1997



Photo by Roy Tan

Louis Maskell

MACK AND MABEL (2nd Revival)

London run: Southwark Playhouse,
July 11th – August 25th

Music & Lyrics: Jerry Herman

Book: Michael Stewart

Director: Thom Southerland

Choreographer: Lee Proud

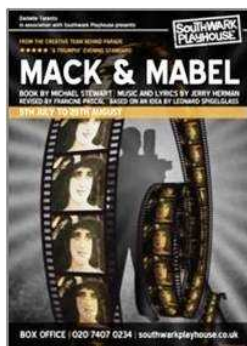
Musical Director: Michael Bradley

Cast: Norman Bowman (*Mack Sennett*),
Laura Pitt-Pulford (*Mabel Normand*),
Jessica Martin (*Lottie*),
Richard J. Hunt (*Fatty Arbuckle*),
Stuart Matthew-Price, Steven Serlin,
Jody Ellen Robinson, Anthony Wise,
Peter Kenworthy, Jessica Buckby,
Ryan Glover, Paul Hutton, Natalie Kent,
Jonathan Norman, Nikki Schofield.



Photo by Annabel Vere

Norman Bowman, Laura Pitt-Pulford & Richard J. Hunt



Notes: With an 11-piece band, an excellent cast and “the highest production values a fringe show has ever seen” (Eve. Standard), this was much praised but, despite some reworking on the book, it remained a problem show. The problems remained in the book itself, lacking shape and momentum, although surrounded by a glorious musical score.

Original London Production: Piccadilly Theatre, November 1995

First revival: Criterion, April 2006

CURTAINS

London run: Landor, July 30th – September 1st



Photo by Francis Loney

Buster Skeggs & Jeremy Legat

CURTAINS

London run: Landor, July 30th – September 1st

Music: John Kander

Lyrics: Fred Ebb

Book: Rupert Holmes

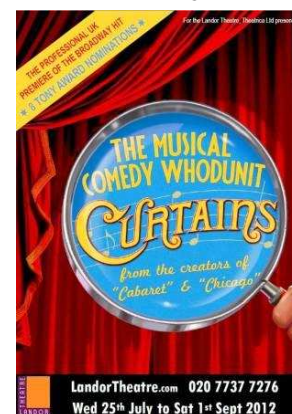
Original book: Peter Stone

Director: Robert McWhirr

Choreographer: Robbie O'Reilly

Musical Director: Michael Webborn

Cast: Stephanie Parker (*Jessica Cranshaw*), Jeremy Legat (*Lt Frank Cioffi*), Buster Skeggs (*Carmen Bernstein*), Bryan Kennedy (*Christopher Belling*), Leo Andrew (*Aaron Fox*), Fiona O'Carroll (*Georgia Hendricks*), Dudley Rogers (*Johnny Harmon*), Thomas Sutcliffe (*Bobby Pepper*), Bronwyn Andrews (*Nikki Harris*), Daniella Bowen (*Bambi*).



Songs: Wide Open Spaces, What Kind of Man?, Thinking of Him, The Woman's Dead, Show People, Lunch Counter Mornings and Coffee Shop Nights, I Miss the Music, Kansas-land, A Tough Act to Follow.

Story: To the relief of everyone in the show, Jessica Cranshaw, the supremely untalented star of "Robbin Hood of the Old West" is murdered during her opening night curtain call. Lt Frank Cioffi, an am-dram and musical-theatre-loving police detective is on the case, and believing the murderer to be still on the premises, he sequesters it. The suspects include the hard-bitten lady producer, Carmen Bernstein; her husband, Sidney; the show's flamboyant director, Christopher Belling; divorced song-writing team Aaron Fox and Georgia Hendricks; Stage Manager Johnny Harmon; choreographer/leading man Bobby Pepper, ingénue Nikki Harris, and ambitious chorine Bambi Bernét.

Cioffi becomes more involved with saving the show than solving the case and finds himself falling for Nikki, hoping she is not the murderer. Rehearsals and re-writes continue as the body-count rises. Can Cioffi solve the case, save the show, and get the girl before the curtain rises - without getting murdered himself?

Notes: Peter Stone died in 2003, and Fred Ebb died the following year, leaving the unfinished musical "Curtains". Rupert Holmes finished the book and together with John Kander contributed the remaining lyrics, and the completed show opened on Broadway on March 22nd 2007. It ran for 511 performances. David Hyde-Pierce won the Tony Award for Best Actor in a Musical for his performance as the detective. The show was felt to be a glorious send-up of showbiz economics, second-rate musicals and camp whodunits with some glittering and witty Kander/Ebb songs, but despite a scintillating first act, the second act was somewhat lacklustre, lacking in bite and with songs that failed to match the satire of the first half. It was definitely a show for "pros" and the "in-crowd" rather than the general public.

LONDON ROAD (Return visit)



London run: Olivier, August 1st – September 6th

Music & Lyrics: Adam Cork

Book & Lyrics: Alecky Blythe

Director: Rufus Norris

Choreographer: Javier de Frutos

Musical Director: David Shrubsole

Cast: Clare Burt, Kate Fleetwood, Hal Fowler, Nick Holder, Claire Moore, Michael Shaeffer, Nicola Sloane, Paul Thornley, Duncan Wisbey, Linzi Hateley, James Doherty

Notes: This was a revival of the August 2011 sell-out production which won the Best Musical at the 2011 Critics' Circle Theatre Awards. With one or two small exceptions, this was the same cast as at the premiere.

Original London run: Cottesloe Theatre, August 2011

Photo by Simon Turtle



Marcus Brigstocke & Jon Culshaw

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT (1st Revival)

London run: Harold Pinter Theatre, July 31st – September 9th

Revived: Playhouse, November 12th - 22 Feb 2014

Music: John du Prez & Eric Idle

Book & Lyrics: Eric Idle

Director: Christopher Luscombe

Choreographer: Jenny Arnold

Musical Director:

Producer: Howard Panter & Bill Kenwright

Cast: Marcus Brigstocke/Jon Culshaw (*King Arthur*), Jon Robyns (*Sir Galahad*), Kit Orton (*Sir Lancelot*), Bonnie Langford (*Lady of the Lake*), Todd Carty (*Patsy*), Robin Armstrong (*Sir Bevedere*), Rob Delaney (*Sir Robin*), Eric Idle (*Voice of God*)

Notes: This was the touring production brought into London for a limited season. The show had been shortened and undergone some re-writing. The “Won’t Succeed on Broadway if you Don’t Have Any Jews” number had now become a song about the West End’s addiction to stars, and the script contained all sorts of

updated references. With Marcus Brigstocke as Arthur, some of the show seemed to be a stand-up comedy. Brigstocke would be replaced in August by Jon Culshaw. The critical reception was cool, but Bonnie Langford and Todd Carty came in for much praise.

Original London run: Palace, October 2006

SOHO CINDERS

London run: Soho, August 9th – September 9th

Music: George Stiles

Lyrics: Anthony Drewe

Book: Elliot Davis & Anthony Drewe

Director: Jonathan Butterell

Choreography: Drew McOnie

Musical Director: Stephen Ridley

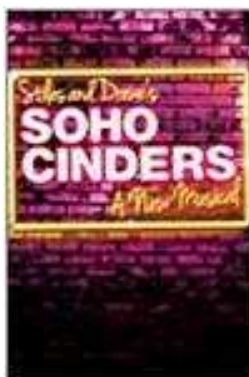
Cast: Thomas Milner (*Robbie*), Suzie Chard (*Clodagh*), Beverley Rudd (*Dana*), Amy Lennox (*Velcro*), Michael Xavier (*James Prince*), Jenna Russell (*Marilyn*), Neil McCaul (*Lord Bellingham*), Gerard Carey, Raj Ghatak, Amanda Posener, and the Voice of Stephen Fry.

Songs: Old Compton Street, Wishing for the Normal, I’m So Over Men, Fifteen Minutes, Gypsies of the Ether, The Tail that Wags the Dog, They Don’t Make Glass Slippers

Story: Robbie is a young Soho rent boy threatened with eviction by his ugly stepsisters, Clodagh and Dana, from the launderette he platonically

shares with the adoring Velcro. His Prince Charming comes in the form of James Prince, with whom Robbie is having an affair. However, James is standing for election as London Mayor, so needs to “play it straight” and make public appearances with his “fiancée” Marilyn. Instead of a ball, there is a big fund-raising bash financed by the manipulative Lord Bellingham (who just happens to be one of Robbie’s clients!); and instead of a glass slipper, there is a lost mobile phone.

Notes: This show was first work-shopped some ten years earlier, and had received a one-night try-out at the Queen’s Theatre in 2011. Finally making it to a full production, it received rather mixed notices: “Bawdy, extravagantly camp, big-hearted and enjoyable” on the one hand; “nauseating stuff. . . dispatched with. . . filthy élan” on the other. However, most critics agreed that the songs were witty and tuneful and it rapidly acquired a cult following.



Thomas Milner & Michael Xavier

Photo by Landmark PR

Photo by Patrick Dodds



Sean Browne & Matilda Sturridge

THE GREAT GATSBY MUSICAL

London run: King's Head,
August 10th – September 1st

Music & Lyrics: Joe Evans

Adaptation: Linnie Redman & Joe Evans

Director: Linnie Redman

Choreographer: Alyssa Noble

Musical Director:

Cast: Raphael Verrion (*Nick Carraway*),
Sean Brown (*Jay Gatsby*),
Matilda Sturridge (*Daisy Buchanan*),
Steven Clarke (*Tom Buchanan*),
Peta Cornish (*Jordan Baker*),
Jon Gabriel Robbins (*George Wilson*),
Naomi Bullock (*Myrtle Wilson*),
Claire-Monique Martin, Alyssa Noble,
Barnaby Brookman, Patrick Lannigan.

Songs: You Cannot Live Forever, Starlight to Casual Moths, Time to Go

Notes: This was the third version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's iconic 1925 novel to appear in London this summer: a play version was performed at Wilton's Music Hall in April, and the complete, unabridged, 8 hour long staging of "Gatz" played 23 performances at the Noel Coward Theatre in June. This third version – the only "musical" one, was more a play with a handful of songs. It dispensed with Nick Carraway's narrative voice and therefore, for many critics, lost the essence of the book. It concentrated less on the mystery of Gatsby and more on the marriage between Gatsby's dream love, Daisy and her rich husband Tom. Other of the novel's characters gathered around the playboy Gatsby in this adaptation included Jordan Baker, the cheating golf pro, and George and Myrtle Wilson. It was generally regarded as a gripping adaptation which had both style and heart.

CAROUSEL (4th Revival)

London run: Barbican, August 17th – September 15th

Music: Richard Rodgers

Lyrics and book: Oscar Hammerstein II.,

Director: Jo Davis

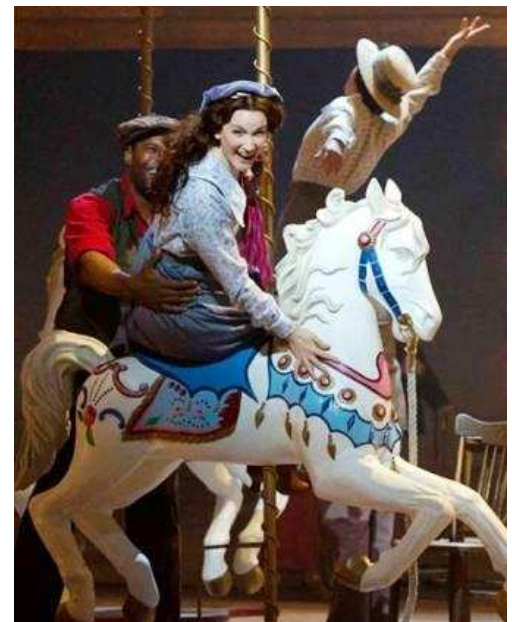
Choreographer: Kay Shepherd & Kim Brandstrup

Musical Director: James Holmes

Producer: Opera North

Cast: Eric Greene/Michael Todd Simpson (*Billy Bigelow*), Gillene Herbert/Katherine Manley (*Julie Jordan*), Claire Boulter/Sarah Tynan (*Carrie Pipperidge*), Joe Shovelton/Philip Lee (*Enoch Snow*), Elena Ferrari/Yvonne Howard (*Nettie Fowler*), Michael Rouse (*Jigger*), Beverley Grant/Alex Newton (*Louise*), Candida Benson (*Mrs Mullin*), John Woodvine, Peter Bodenham, William Kenning

Notes: This was an Opera North touring production, much praised at the Lowry, and stopping in London on its way to Paris. As frequently happens when "opera" companies tackle musicals, the critical reaction divides into two camps: those who claim the singers can't act adequately, and those who claim it is gloriously refreshing to hear "proper" voices singing a great score. The overall verdict was this was an excellent and powerful revival, if perhaps a little drawn-out.



Eric Greene & Gillene Herbert

Photo by Alastair Muir

Original London Production: Drury Lane June 1950 ; First revival: Lyttleton Theatre, December 1992
Second revival: Shaftesbury Theatre, September 1993; Third revival: Savoy, December 2008

ALADDIN (1st Revival)

London run: Lilian Baylis Theatre, Aug 19th – Sep 2nd
(Four successive Sundays)

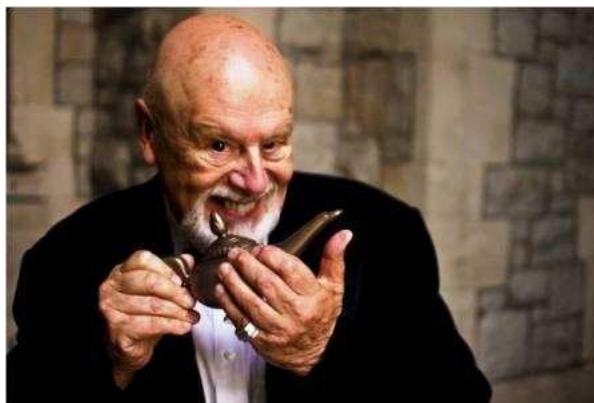
Music & Lyrics: Cole Porter

Book: S.J. Perelman

Director: Ian Marshall-Fisher

Producer: Lost Musicals

Cast: Richard Dempsey (*Aladdin*),
Candy Ma (*Princess*),
Vivienne Martin (*Aladdin's Mother*),
Michael Roberts (*Emperor*),
John Savident (*Sui Generis*),
John Rawnsley (*Astrologer*),
Phil Wrigley (*Governor*),
Hannah Caton (*Plum Blossom*), Rhiannon Drake (*Jade Bud*), Stewart Permutt (*Wu Fang*),
Rez Kempton (*Genie*), Richard Stemp, Matt Elson



John Savident

Songs: Come to the Supermarket in Old Peking, Make Way for the Emperor, Trust Your Destiny To Your Star, Opportunity Knocks But Once, I Adore You, No Wonder Taxes are High.

Notes: Inspired by the Rodgers and Hammerstein's TV "Cinderella", Cole Porter was persuaded to write an American television version of "Aladdin" to a screenplay by S.J.Perelman. This was broadcast in 1958 with Cyril Ritchard, Basil Rathbone and Sal Mineo. The following year it was "adapted" into a British pantomime and performed over Christmas at the Coliseum with Bob Monkhouse. The British adaptation introduced new characters, changed names, altered the plot and interpolated traditional pantomime characters as well as new songs, not always by Cole Porter. Although it was billed as Cole Porter's "Aladdin", it was a very different show to the original. This production was therefore the British premiere, true to the original Cole Porter show and the Arabian Nights Tale.

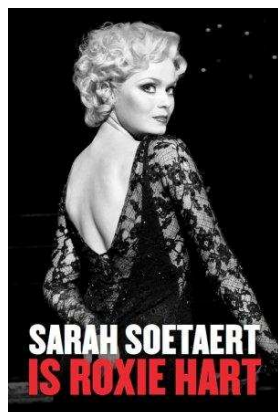
Original London run: Coliseum, December 1959

CHICAGO (Closing Performance)

London run: Opened Adelphi Theatre, November 18th 1997

Closed September 1st, 2012 at the Garrick Theatre





CHICAGO (Closing Performance)

London run: Opened Adelphi Theatre, Nov 18th 1997
Closed September 1st, 2012 at the Garrick Theatre

Music: John Kander

Lyrics: Fred Ebb

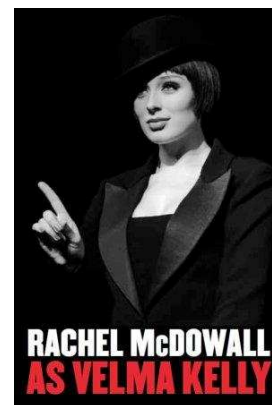
Book: Fred Ebb & Bob Fosse

Director: Walter Bobbie

Choreographer: Ann Reinking

Musical Director: Gareth Valentine

The Final Cast: Sarah Soetaert (*Roxie Hart*),
Rachel McDowall (*Velma Kelly*),
James Doherty (*Amos Hart*), Jasna Ivir (*Momma Morton*),
Robin Cousins (*Billy Flynn*), R. Whitehead (*Mary Sunshine*)



Notes: This revival enjoyed a run of almost 15 years in the West End. It transferred from Broadway, and was staged in London by the Broadway team, director Walter Bobbie, designer John Lee Beatty, with choreography by Ann Reinking in the style of Bob Fosse. The show ran at the Adelphi Theatre for nine years until transferring to the Cambridge Theatre in April 2006 and to the Garrick Theatre in November 2011. The original cast included Ute Lemper as Velma, Ruthie Henshall as Roxie Hart, Nigel Planer as Amos Hart and Henry Goodman as Billy Flynn. The production won the 1998 Olivier Award for Outstanding Musical, and Ute Lemper was awarded Best Actress in a Musical. Both Ute Lemper and Ruthie Henshall would later play the role of Velma on Broadway.

Over the years cast replacements of the two leading ladies have included : Maria Friedman, Josefina Gabrielle, Denise Van Outen, Claire Sweeney, Linzi Hateley, Francis Ruffelle, Jennifer Ellison, Jill Halfpenny, Brooke Shields, Sally Ann Triplett, Bonnie Langford, Tina Arena, Ashlee Simpson, Aoife Mulholland, Michelle Williams and Christie Brinkley. Various Billy Flynnns have included Marti Pellow, David Hasselhoff, John Barrowman, Tony Hadley, Jerry Springer, Kevin Richardson, Ian Kelsey and Robin Cousins.

The revival opened: Adelphi Theatre, November 18th, 1997

Transferred to Cambridge Theatre, April 24th, 2006 – August 27th 2011

Transferred to Garrick Theatre, November 7th, 2011 – September 1st, 2012

Original London run: Cambridge Theatre, April 1979

RENT (4th Revival)

London run: Greenwich Theatre, September 7th – 16th

Music, Lyrics & Book: Jonathan Larson

Director: Paul Taylor-Mills

Choreographer: Richard Jones

Musical Director: Huw Evans & Tom Turner

Cast: Benjamin Stratton (*Mark Cohen*), Edward Handoll (*Roger*), Steph Fearon (*Mimi*), Gary Wood (*Angel*), David Hinton-Gale (*Benny*), Mikel Sylvanus (*Collins*), Zoe Birkett (*Maureen*), Jamie Birkett (*Joanne*), Maeve Byrne

Notes: The fourth revival of this show attracted its by-now regular cult following, and with a 28 strong ensemble it offered urgent vocal power and earnest commitment. However, 16 years on, it was beginning to sound dated, and, according to one critic "I couldn't help finding something distinctly creepy about a stage full of beaming white-toothed actors bellowing cheerfully about Aids, homelessness and drug addiction" (Time Out).

Original London production: Shaftesbury, May 1998

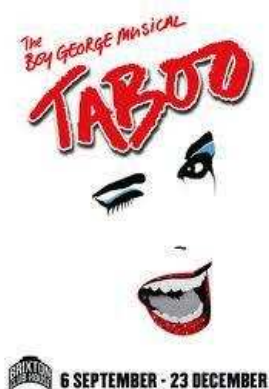
First revival: Prince of Wales, December 2001

Second Revival: Prince of Wales, December 2002

Third revival: Duke of York's October 2007



Photo by Clare Bilyard



TABOO (1st Revival)

London run: Brixton Club House, September 7th – December 23rd

Music: Kevan Frost, Richie Stevens & John Themis

Book & Lyrics: Mark Davies & Boy George

Director: Christopher Renshaw

Choreographer: Frank Thompson

Musical Director: Matt Smith

Cast: Matthew Rowland (*Boy George*), Sam Buttery (*Leigh Bowery*), Alistair Brammer (*Billy*), Niamh Perry (*Kim*), Adam Bailey (*Marilyn*), Owain Williams (*Steve Strange*), Paul Baker (*Philip Sallon*), Sarah Ingram (*Josie*), Michael Matus (*Derek/Petal*), Katie Kerr (*Big Sue*), Daniella Bowen (*Janey*)

Notes: This was the first revival, ten years after its London premiere. There was much praise for Matthew Rowland and Sam Buttery, though mainly the critics felt it was over-long and was a glorified cakewalk for the outré fashions of the 80s.

Original London run: The Venue, January 2002

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR (2nd Revival)



Ben Forster and Tim Minchin

London Run: O2 Arena, September 21st – 23rd

Music: Andrew Lloyd Webber

Lyrics: Tim Rice

Book: Tom O'Horgan

Director: Laurence Connor

Producers: Really Useful Group & AEG Live

Cast: Ben Forster (*Jesus*), Tim Minchin (*Judas*), Melanie Chisholm (*Mary Magdalene*), Chris Moyles (*Herod*), Alex Hanson (*Pilate*), Pete Gallagher (*Caiaphas*), Giovanni Spano (*Simon Zealotes*), Gerard Bentall (*Annas*), Michael Pickering (*Peter*), and a chorus of 40

Notes: This was a huge-scale revival intended to play some stadium or arena touring dates following its three day London production. The role of Jesus had been cast

following a public vote on a TV “search for a star” show. Of London’s nine major critical reviews, three were full of praise – deeming Ben Forster superb as Jesus, Mel C surprisingly moving as Mary Magdalene and the whole cast magnificent. They also lavished superlatives on the updated production, with its business suits, its echoes of the St Paul’s Cathedral/ Occupy Movement protests, and Chris Moyle’s leering Herod presenting a “Fraud or the Lord” television game show.

However, another three were mildly favourable, but lamented it as over-amplified, over-blown, and a bit lost in the vastness of the O2 arena. And the final three were scathing in their condemnation: Ben Forster, despite brilliant high notes, played it with two facial expressions (“pained and faintly smouldering”); Mel C was “laid back to the point of blankness”; “not so much a musical as a deadening travesty of a great show”, “not so much resurrected as exhumed”, “it starts badly and continues in the same desperate vein for more than two hours”.

On the other hand, every one of the critics heaped praise on Tim Minchin as Judas – the outstanding success of the show.

Original London run: Palace Theatre, August 1972

1st Revival: Lyceum, November 1996





LET IT BE

London run: Prince of Wales, September 24th - January 19th 2013
Transfer to Savoy, February 1st, 2013

Music: John Lennon & Paul McCartney

Book: Rain

Director: Joey Curatolo

Cast: Reuven Gershon/ Michael Gagliano (*John Lennon*),
Emmanuele Angeletti/ James Fox (*Paul McCartney*),
Gordon Elsmore/Phil Martin (*Ringo Starr*),
Stephen Hill/John Brosnan (*George Harrison*), Ryan Farmery/Michael Bramwell

Notes: This was essentially a concert of Beatles numbers performed in more or less chronological order by a remarkably good cover band. The different “looks” of the Beatles required several costume changes, and these were covered with newsreel footage projected onto giant screens. It was performed alternately by two separate casts.

For some it was a glorious trip down memory lane, for others it was an exercise in “faintly necrophiliac nostalgia”. For the Sunday Times critic, it wasn’t homage, “it’s grave-robbing. A copper bottomed stinker.”



Photo by Annabel Moehler

THE LAST SESSION

London run: Tristan Bates, September 26th – October 27th

Music: Steve Schalchin

Lyrics: John Bettis & Marie Cain

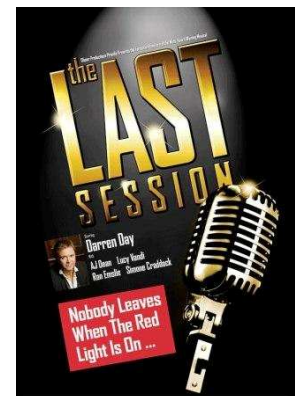
Book: Jim Brochu

Director: Guy Retallack

Musical Director: Tom Turner

Cast: Darren Day (*Gideon*), Simone Craddock (*Vicki*), A.J. Dean (*Buddy*),
Ron Emslie (*Jim*), Lucy Vandt (*Tryshia*)

Story: Gideon is a gay singer and songwriter, in the advanced stages of AIDS. He decides that he will undertake one last session and record a farewell album for his partner, and then he will commit suicide. However, Buddy, a young singer and an ardent Christian, arrives on the scene, determined to prevent Gideon from taking his own life. Buddy believes Gideon can be of real use to fellow-sufferers, in the role



of a kind of “Baptist Barry Manilow”.



Photo by Robert Workman

Notes: This was first presented off-Broadway in 1997. The passing of time and the development of new treatments and new attitudes towards AIDS in the intervening years tended to blunt the edges of the show’s “message” – but the music and the performances came in for some praise.

A.J. Dean, Darren Day,
Simone Craddock & Lucy Vandt



Photo by Helen Atcher

Yvette Robinson & Michael Onslow

MARGUERITE (1st Revival)

London run: Tabard, October 3rd – 27th

Music: Michel Legrand

Lyrics: Herbert Kretzmer (Original French lyrics: Alain Boublil)

New Lyrics: John Dempsey, Callum McIntyre

Original Book: Alain Boublil Claude-Michel Schönberg & Jonathan Kent

New book: Alain Boublil and Guy Unsworth

Director: Guy Unsworth

Choreographer: Cressida Carre

Musical Director: Alex Parker

Cast: Yvette Robinson (*Marguerite*), Nadim Naaman (*Armand*), Zoe Doano (*Annette*), Alastair Knights (*Pierrot*), Michael Onslow (*Otto*), Mark Turnbull (*Georges*), James Meunier, Daniel Oliver, Helena Raeburn, Jessica Parker, Jennifer Rhodes, James Darch,

Notes: This first revival had been re-worked to accommodate a smaller cast, and re-written to address some of the book problems that had been criticised on its 2008 premiere. The revisions included some new musical material, especially a new 11 o'clock number, "The Face I See", and had been developed from try-out

productions staged in Japan and in the Czech Republic. The general critical reaction was very luke-warm, with several people feeling the show had not been improved in any way, and a few suggesting the re-writing had added to the problems.

Original London run: Haymarket, May 2008



CABARET (5th Revival)

London run: Savoy, October 9th - January 19th 2013

Music: John Kander

Lyrics: Fred Ebb

Book: Joe Masteroff

Director: Rufus Norris

Choreographer: Javier de Frutos

Musical Director: Tom de Keyser

Producer: Bill Kenwright

Cast: Michelle Ryan (*Sally Bowles*), Will Young (*Emcee*), Matt Rawle (*Clifford*), Sian Phillips (*Fräulein Schneider*), Linal Haft (*Herr Schultz*), Nicholas Tizzard (*Ernst Ludwig*), Harriet Thorpe (*Fräulein Kost*)

Notes: This was a revival of the dark and disturbing production which had a much praised two year run in 2006. For this revival several of the numbers had been re-staged with different choreography, and some critics felt it had lost some of its power and ability to shock. The performance of "pop-idol" Will Young, in his West End, was acclaimed, and there was much praise for Sian Phillips and Linal Haft.

See Original London Production: Palace Theatre, February 1968;

First Revival: Strand Theatre, July 1986 ;

Second revival: Donmar Warehouse, December 1993;

Third revival: Union, July 2002

Fourth revival: Lyric Theatre, October 2006

Will Young as EmCee



Photo by Jane Hobson

Photo by Alastair Muir



Victoria Farley & Mark Daley

THE HOT MIKADO (2nd Revival)

London run: Landor, October 10th – November 3rd

Music: Sir Arthur Sullivan & Rob Bowman

Book & Lyrics: David H. Bell

Director: Robert McWhir

Choreographer: Robbie O'Reilly

Musical Director: Michael Webborn

Cast: Mandi Symonds (*Katisha*),
Mark Daley (*Nanki-Poo*), Ian Mowatt (*Ko-Ko*),
Nathaniel Morrison (*Pooh-Bah*),
Victoria Farley (*Yum-Yum*),
Lucyelle Cliff (*Pitti-Sing*),
Piers Bate

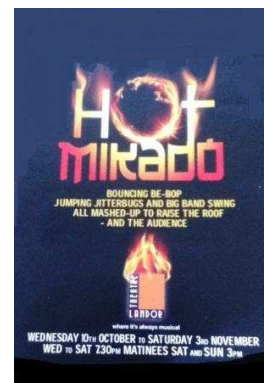
This revival with a three-piece band on view (though five musicians were credited in the programme) was regarded as “rough and ready”, but great fun.

See Original London production:

Queen's Theatre, May 1995

First revival:

Upstairs at the Gatehouse, Dec 2004



DREAMBOATS & PETTICOATS (1st Revival)

London run: Wyndhams, October 16th – January 19, 2013

Music & Lyrics: Various

Book: Laurence Marks & Maurice Gran

Director: Bob Tomson

Choreographer: Carole Todd

Musical Director: Keith Strachan

Producer: Bill Kenwright & Laurie Mansfield

Cast: David Ribbi (*Bobby*),
Susannah Allman (*Sue*),
Sam Attwater (*Norman*),
Samantha Dorrance (*Laura*),

Notes: Just three months after closing at the Playhouse, this was back in the West End for the Christmas season.

Original London run:

Savoy Theatre,

July - Sept 2009

Re-staged: Playhouse Theatre,

Jan 6th 2010 – Aug 4th 2012

Susannah Allman &
Sam Attwater



Photo by Alastair Muir

Photo by Tristram Kenton



LOSERVILLE

London run: Garrick, Oct 17th – Jan 5th 2013

Book, Music & Lyrics: Elliot Davis
& James Bourne

Director: Steven Dexter

Choreographer: Nick Winston

Musical Director: Jim Henson

Cast: Aaron Sidwell (*Michael Dork*),
Daniel Buckley (*Marvin*),
Richard Lowe (*Lucas*),
Eliza Hope Bennett (*Holly*),
Stewart Clarke (*Eddie*),
Jade Albertsen (*Britney Marks*),
Ashley Luke Lloyd (*Alvin Starburst*)

Songs: Living in the Future Now, Don't Let

'Em Bring You Down, Brains and Looks, Slacker, The Little Things, We're Not Alone, Ticket Outta Loserville, Holly I'm the One, Long Run, What's so Weird About Me?

Story: Set in a totally unrecognisable 1971, Loserville is the story of four High School geeks trying to make their mark in a jock-dominated world. Computer lover Michael Dork, assisted by his geeky friend Marvin, is determined to make his machines "message each other"; his sci-fi writer friend Lucas (the clue's in the name) is working on a novel called "Galaxy Battles"; Holly provides the love interest as wannabe "woman astronaut" who is "cursed with brains and looks," and who once in a mad moment had some sexy photos taken. The villain, rich kid Eddie, threatens to show these photos to any potential employer, and plans to steal Michael's inventions.

Notes: Five of the songs derive from James Bourne's 2005 album "Welcome to Loserville" which he created with his post-Busted pop-punk band, Son of Dork. The show had a workshop production at the South Hill Park Arts Centre in 2009, and then was staged at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds with the part of Eddie played by Gareth Gates. The production, minus Gareth Gates, transferred to the West End. It was originally scheduled to run until March 7th, but following mostly poor notices, it was announced the show would come off on January 5th

9 TO 5 – THE MUSICAL

London run: New Wimbledon Theatre, October 23rd – 27th

Music & Lyrics: Dolly Parton

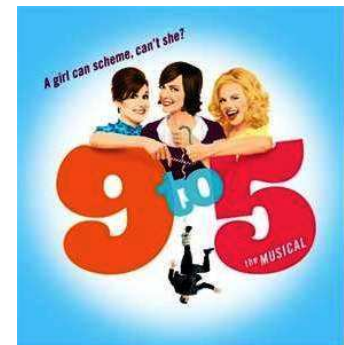
Book: Patricia Resnick

Director: Jeff Calhoun

Choreographer: Jeff Calhoun & Lisa Stevens

Musical Director:

Cast: Amy Lennox (*Doralee Rhodes*), Bonnie Langford (*Roz Keith*),
Ben Richards (*Franklin Hart*), Jackie Clune (*Violet Newstead*),
Natalie Casey (*Judy Bernly*),



Songs: 9 to 5, Around Here, Backwoods Barbie, Cowgirl's Revenge, Potion Notion, Here for You, Joy to the Girls, Shine Like the Sub, One of the Boys, Let Love Grow, Get Out and Stay Out

Story: Three women - Violet, a smart office manager gazumped for promotion by a younger and far less experienced man; Judy, whose husband recently dumped her for a younger edition; and Doralee, an executive assistant - take on their vile, sexist, groping boss, Mr Hart. In revenge for his description of the girls as "You're just a typewriter. . . with tits", they kidnap him, truss him up like a turkey, and suspend him from a hoist in his own bedroom, and then go on to reform the office, make a success of the business and expose his corruption. Meantime, there is another woman, Hart's PA, Roz, obsessed with erotic fantasies, who lusts after him and acts as the office nark.

Notes: Based on the 1980 film, the musical premiered in Los Angeles in September 2008 and opened on Broadway in April 2009. It received 15 Drama Desk Award nominations and 4 Tony Award Nominations and, surprisingly, ran just five months, following very unenthusiastic reviews. The British production was launched at the Manchester Opera House on October 12th 2012 at the start of a UK tour which was scheduled to run until the summer of 2013. The London critics reviewed it at Wimbledon and generally loved it, claiming it was even more fun than the movie.

VICTOR VICTORIA (1st Revival)

London run: Southwark Playhouse, November 1st – December 15th

Music: Henry Mancini

Extra music: Frank Wildhorn

Lyrics: Leslie Bricusse

Book: Blake Edwards

Director: Thom Southerland

Choreographer: Lee Proud

Musical Director: Joseph Atkins

Cast: Anna Francolini (*Victoria*), Richard Dempsey (*Toddy*), Matthew Cutts (*King Marchand*), Michael Cotton (*Squash*), Kate Nelson (*Norma*), Mark Curry (*André*), Ashleigh Knight (*Labisse*)

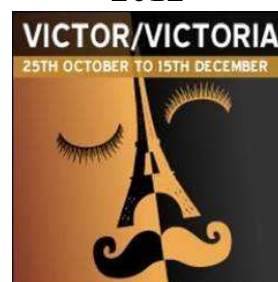


Photo by Annabel Vere

Matthew Cutts, Anna Francolini and Richard Dempsey

Notes: This revival was another in the series of musicals directed by Thom Southerland in the vaulted raw brick space underneath London bridge railway station.

Although these Southwark/Southerland musicals had only started in January 2011, they were already established as exciting, imaginative revivals. Even though the show itself was considered fairly second-rate, the performance and staging received considerable critical praise.

Original London production: Bridewell, January 2004

SCROOGE – THE MUSICAL (2nd Revival)

London run: Palladium, November 6th – January 5th 2013

Music, Lyrics & Book: Leslie Bricusse

Director: Bob Tomson

Choreographer: Lisa Kent

Musical Director: Stuart Pedlar

Producer: Bill Kenwright

Cast: Tommy Steele (*Scrooge*), Craig Whitely (*Young Scrooge*), Edward Handoll (*Bob Cratchit*), Barry Howard (*Jacob Marley*), Sarah Earnshaw (*Christmas Past*), James Head (*Christmas Present*), Leon Kay (*Christmas Yet to Come*)



Photo by Tristram Kenton

Tommy Steele, now in his 76th year, had been playing this role on and off for the past seven years, following his original version sixteen years earlier. As one critic said: “there is probably only one way to stop Tommy Steele from playing Scrooge. . . and that would be to cancel Christmas.” It was generally welcomed, with much admiration for the illusions of special-effects designer, Paul Kieve.

Original London Production:
Dominion, November 1996
First revival: London Palladium,
November 2005

Photo by Roy Tan



Jay Rincorn & Sarah Galbraith

STEEL PIER

London run: Union SE1, Nov 6th – 24th

Music: John Kander

Lyrics: Fred Ebb

Book: David Thompson

Director: Paul Taylor-Mills

Choreographer: Richard Jones

Musical Director: Angharad Sander

Cast: Ian Knauer (*Mick Hamilton*),
Sarah Galbraith (*Rita Racine*),
Jay Rincorn (*Billy Kelly*),
Aime Atkinson (*Shelby Stevens*)

Songs: Willing to Ride, Everybody Dance,
Second Chance, Everybody's Girl,
Lovebird, The Sprints, Leave the World
Behind, Somebody Older, Two Little
Words, First You Dream

Story: In the honky-tonk world of marathon dancing in Atlantic City in 1933, a captivating assortment of depression-era souls, eager to dance their way into fame and prizes, gather on the Steel Pier. The spectacle is presided over by Mick Hamilton, an oily-tongued master of ceremonies, a man willing to do anything to get what he wants. He is secretly married to vivacious Rita Racine, a charismatic performer whose show business career has descended from Vaudeville through side shows and air shows to being a dance marathon champion. Her usual partner doesn't show up, so she is paired with Billy Kelly, a handsome young pilot. As the hours of dancing whirl on, Rita becomes increasingly disillusioned with her conniving husband and more and more infatuated with the handsome young pilot. She begins to dream of a life in a peaceful cottage far from Atlantic City.

Notes: Inspired by Horace McCoy's 1935 novel "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?", the musical version was conceived by Scott Ellis, Susan Stroman and David Thompson. It collected 11 Tony nominations during its Broadway run, but was a major flop. It opened on April 24, 1997 and closed on June 28, running for just 76 performances (and 33 previews). A revised amateur production ran at the Bridewell Theatre in February 2011, but this was its professional UK premiere.

DADDY LONG LEGS

London run: St James Theatre, Nov 7th – Dec 8th

Music & Lyrics: Paul Gordon

Book: John Caird

Director: John Caird

Cast: Megan McGinnis (*Jersha "Judy" Abbott*),
Robert Adelman Hancock (*Jervis Pendleton*)

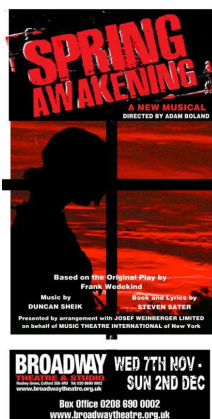
Story: Wealthy bachelor Jervis Pendleton, secretly and anonymously sponsors young orphan, Jersha Abbott, through her College education. The only condition is that she must write to him every month – though he will never reply – and she must never seek out his real identity. Instead of the crusty old "Daddy Long Legs" she imagines him to be, he is a young and eligible bachelor. Eventually, of course, they do meet and fall in love.



Robert Adelman-Hancock & Megan McGinnis

Photo by Alastair Muir

Notes: Jean Webster's 1912 novel "Daddy Long Legs" had already been made into a stage play, and a stage musical ("Love from Judy" which had a very successful run at the Saville Theatre in 1952) as well as a film ("Daddy Long Legs" with Fred Astaire and Leslie Caron in 1955). This two-handed version was a chamber-musical told in the form of letters, and had originated in Los Angeles in 2009. Despite considerable success in the USA, and a winning performance from the Megan McGinnis, who originated the role in America, it was criticised as too static and too cloying for London. "Diabetics should check their medication before entering" (Daily Mail), "Like being hooked up to a drip-feed of honey" (Times).



SPRING AWAKENING (2nd Revival)

London run: Broadway Studio, November 7th – December 2nd

Music: Duncan Sheik

Book & Lyrics: Steven Sater.

Director: Adam Boland

Musical Director: Michael Webborn

Cast: Victoria Serra (*Wendela*), Joshua Tonks (*Melchior*), Greg Oliver (*Moritz*), Dom Hodson (*Hanschen*), Natalie McQueen, Maria Coyne.

Notes: This revival was praised for its musical values from a four-piece band, for its novel design - involving a set painted in chalkboard black which was defaced by the cast throughout the show - and for the excellent lighting design by Leigh Mulpeter. With a committed and talented young cast, some re-arrangement of the song-order of the original show, and its bold directorial concept, it came in for considerable praise.

Original London Production: Lyric Hammersmith, (transfer: Novello) February, 2009

First revival: Greenwich Theatre, June 2011

BLOOD BROTHERS (1st Revival – Closing Night)

London run: Albery Theatre, July 28th 1988

Transferred to Phoenix Theatre, November 21st 1991

Final Performance: November 10th 2012

Music & Lyrics: Willy Russell

Director: Bob Tomson

Musical Director: Rod Edwards

Producer: Bill Kenwright

Final Night Cast: Lyn Paul (*Mrs Johnstone*), Sean Jones (*Mickey*), Mark Hutchinson (*Eddie*), Jan Graveson (*Linda*), Vivienne Carlyle (*Mrs Lyons*), Warwick Evans (*Narrator*), Kevin Pallister, Michael Southern, Matt Slack, Joanne Dalladay, Alex Harlan, Dashley Morgan, Craig-Anthony Kelly, Simon Turner.

Notes: The original London Production at the Lyric Theatre in April 1983 won the Olivier Award for the Best New Musical. This revised version opened at the Albery in July 1988, transferred to the Phoenix in November 1991 and proceeded to run for more than 24 years and more than 10,000 performances. On its closing night it had become the third longest-running musical in West End history. It had an Australian production in 1988 and in April 1991 began an 839 performance run on Broadway. There have been six UK tours during the past 20 years.

In its London, international and touring versions the central role of Mrs Johnstone has been played by, amongst others: Angela Richards, Barbara Dickson, Clodagh Rodgers, Lyn Paul, Siobhan McCarthy, four of the Nolan Sisters (Linda, Bernie, Denise and Maureen), Melanie Chisholm, Niki Evans, Amy Robbins, Natasha Hamilton, Vivienne Carlyle, Helen Reddy, Carole King, Delia Hannah and Petula Clark. However, Stephanie Lawrence played the leading role more times than anyone else, and is chiefly remembered for this part. Amongst the actors who have appeared are: David & Shaun Cassidy, Sean Jones, Anthony Costa, Stefan Dennis, David Bardsley, Mark Hutchinson, Warwick Evans, Robert Locke, Carl Wayne, David Soul, Keith Burns, Philip Stewart and Marti Pellow.

Originally due to close on 27 October, its run was extended by 2 weeks when producer Bill Kenwright brought back some of favourite cast, including Lyn Paul and the original narrator, Warwick Evans. A tribute was paid to supporting player Alex Harlan, who had played the role of the postman for more than 4,000 performances.

For the final performance, after the cast had taken their bows, a large screen was flown in. One by one pictures appeared of cast members who have performed at the Phoenix, until the end when the final three artists - the late Robert Locke, Carl Wayne and Stephanie Lawrence - appeared. This was accompanied by an a capella version of the final verse of "Tell Me It's Not True".

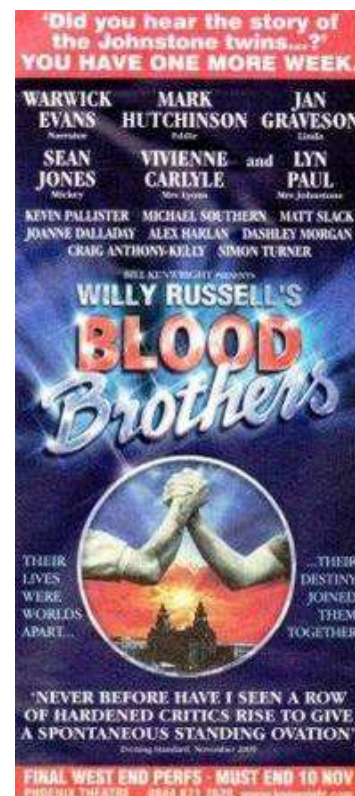
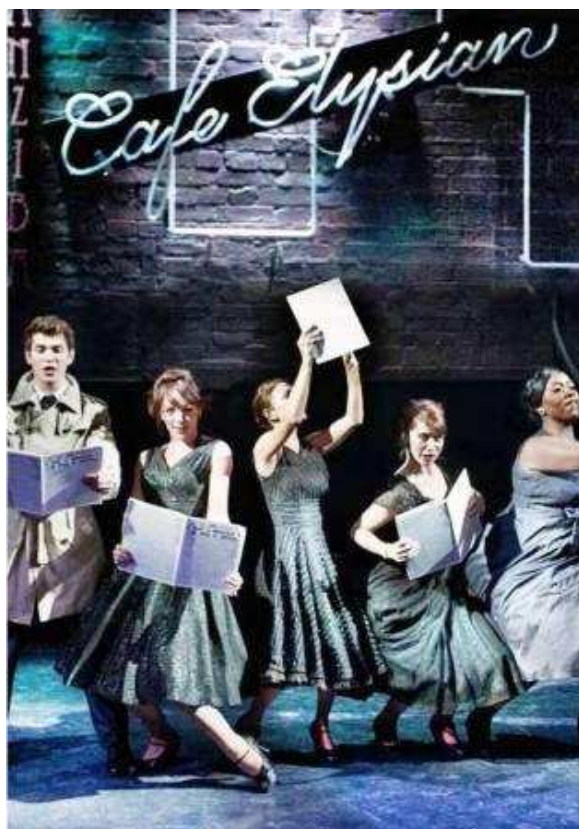


Photo by Alastair Muir



SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

London run: Arcola, November 14th – December 22nd

Music: Marvin Hamlisch

Lyrics: Craig Carnelia

Book: John Guare

Director: Mehmet Ergen

Choreographer: Nathan M. Wright

Musical Director: Bob Broad

Cast: David Bamber (*J.J. Hunsecker*),
Adrian der Gregorian (*Sidney Falcone*),
Russell Morton (*Tony*), Stuart Matthew Price (*Dallas*),
Caroline Keiff (*Susan*), Celia Graham (*Rita*)

Songs: The Column, I Cannot Hear the City, Welcome to the Night, Laughing all the way to the Bank, Don't Know Where you leave Off, At the Fountain, One Track Mind, Don't Look Now, Rita's tune

Story: Powerful New York gossip columnist, J.J. Hunsecker, has the dirt on everyone, from the President to the latest starlet. Sidney Falcone, a struggling publicity agent, needs to get press coverage for Toni, the owner of the Club Voodoo, and for Dallas, its hot young piano player. Visiting the club is a classy beauty, Susan, who fancies Dallas – but she is pursued by an angry J.J. Hunsecker. He turns out to be her brother and is furious she is in a seedy dive and showing an unsuitable interest in a second-rate

pianist. J.J. is impressed with Sidney, and offers him a deal: lots of publicity in JJ's column in return for Sidney, now renamed Falco, following Susan and reporting on all he sees. As part of this Faustian pact to break up the lovers, Sidney pimps his former girl-friend, Rita, double-crosses J.J. and then double-deals Susan and Dallas. Falco's corrupt rise ends in extreme violence, though it does mean he finally gets to be the lead item in that day's gossip column.

Notes: Based on the story by Ernest Lehman and the 1957 film version starring Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis, this musical version began as a workshop in Toronto in August 1998 and was developed into a full-scale show which opened on Broadway on March 14, 2002, directed by Nicholas Hytner with John Lithgow as J.J. Hunsecker and Brian d'Arcy James as Falco. Despite 7 Tony Award nominations and an eventual Tony Award for John Lithgow, the show flopped – running just three months, closing on June 15, after 109 performances and 18 previews. This was its UK premiere – by chance just four months after the death of Marvin Hamlisch – and it was generally felt to be a fascinating if flawed work.

BOY MEETS BOY

London run: Jermyn Street Theatre,
November 27th – December 20th

Anna Nichols
with
Benjamin Bailey
Gregory Simms
Jay Webb
Aron Wild





BOY MEETS BOY

London run: Jermyn Street Theatre, November 27th – December 20th

Music and lyrics: Bill Solly

Book: Bill Solly and Donald Ward

Director: Gene David Kirk

Choreographer: Lee Proud

Musical Director: Stefan Bednarczyk

Cast: Stephen Ashfield (*Casey O'Brian*), Craig Fletcher (*Guy Rose*), Ben Kavanagh (*Clarence Cutler*), Johnjo Flynn (*Andrew*), Anna Nicholas (*Lady Rose*), Benjamin Bailey, Carly Mackelvie, Nicola Martin, Gregory Sims, Bianca Szynal, Helen Turner, Jay Webb, Aron Wild.

Songs: A Boy's Life, Boy Scout Badges,

Story: In December 1936 the Abdication Crisis is reaching a climax, Europe is threatened by the Nazi menace, and America is struggling in the Depression. However, inside the Savoy Hotel, carefree party-goers dance away, and boy meets boy, boy loses boy, and boy gets boy. American newsman Casey O'Brien is looking for the real story why wealthy English lad Guy Rose dramatically jilted the Boston millionaire Clarence Cutler at the very altar. Set in London and in a burlesque joint in gay Paris, Casey's blinkered hunt for Guy loses him the scoop of the century (Edward and Mrs Simpson) but gains him the love of his life.

Notes: This musical originally opened off-Broadway in 1975 and ran for 463 performances. The idea of a "Fred & Ginger" style romance and marriage between two gay men – the marriage accepted as a perfectly normal and acceptable event – had a certain unplanned relevance. This British premiere co-incided with a Government attempt to introduce a bill allowing same-sex marriage in the UK. The show was praised for its period charm, its wit, its music and its cunning twist on the standard love story. It was a great box office success.

KISS ME KATE (5th Revival)

London run: Old Vic, Nov 27th – March 2nd 2013

Music & Lyrics: Cole Porter; **Book:** Sam & Bella Spewack

Director: Trevor Nunn; **Choreographer:** Stephen Mear

Musical Director: Gareth Valentine

Producer: Chichester Festival Theatre

Cast: Alex Bourne (*Fred Graham*), Hannah Waddingham (*Lili Vanessi*), Paul Grunert (*Harry*), Holly Dale Spencer (*Lois Lane*), Adam Garcia (*Bill Calhoun*), David Burt & Clive Rowe (*Gangsters*), Wendy Mae Brown (*Hattie*), Jason Pennycooke (*Paul*), Mark Heenehan (*Harrison Howell*), Kevin Brewis (*Hortensio*)

Notes: Chichester had recently been responsible for "Sweeney Todd" and "Singin' in the Rain" – both transferring triumphantly to the West End. This show provided a hat-trick. One or two of the critics were lukewarm and disdainful, feeling the combination of Trevor Nunn/Old Vic/ & Cole Porter was unseemly and the show took time to warm up. However, the overall enthusiasm for the cast and the exuberance of the show itself earned five stars from the large majority of the reviewers.

Notes: Original London Production,
March 1951

1st revival, Coliseum, Dec 1970

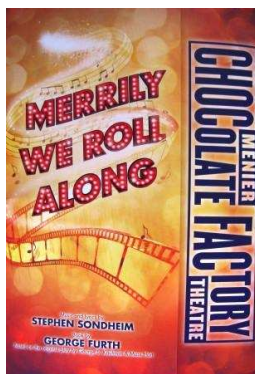
2nd revival: Old Vic/Savoy, May 1987

3rd revival: Open Air Theatre, July 1997

4th Revival: Victoria Palace, Oct 2001



Holly Dale Spencer, Adam Garcia,
Samuel Holmes, Kevin Brewis & company



MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG (2nd Revival)

London run: Menier Chocolate Factory: November 28th - 9th March, 2013

Transfer: Harold Pinter Theatre: April 23rd—July 27th (12 week season)

Music & Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim

Book: George Furth

Director: Maria Friedman

Choreographer: Tim Jackson

Musical Director: Catherine Jayes

Cast: Mark Umbers (*Franklin Shepard*), Damian Humbley (*Charles Kringas*), Jenna Russell (*Mary Flynn*), Josefina Gabrielle (*Gussie Carnegie*), Glyn Kerslake (*Joe Josephson*), Clare Foster (*Beth Spencer*),

Zisi Strallen (*Meg Kincaid*)

Notes: This revival met with almost universal praise, with several critics wondering why both its earlier incarnations had been flops. With a nine-piece band, this production used a cast of “older” performers playing younger as the story moves backwards. (Earlier productions often used younger actors who started off “aged up”.) The strength of the performers and production meant that the piece’s emotional pulse never faltered. Its success led to a planned West End transfer (in the same way that previous Menier Sondheim productions had done) and a 3 month limited season at the Harold Pinter Theatre was planned to open in April 2013.



Photo by Tristram Kenton

Original London production: The Prince, SE 10, May 1998

First revival: Donmar Warehouse, December 2000

ONCE UPON A MATTRESS (2nd Revival)

London run: Union Theatre, November 28th– January 5th 2013

Music: Mary Rodgers

Lyrics: Marshall Barer

Book: Jay Thompson, Marshall Barer & Dean Fuller

Director: Kirk Jameson

Choreographer: Ricky Plews

Musical Director: Alex Parker

Cast: Jenny O’Leary (*Princess Winnifred*), Mark Anderson (*Prince Dauntless*), Paddy Glynn (*Queen Agravain*), Denis Quilligan (*King*), Ryan Limb (*Minstrel*), David Pendlebury (*Wizard*), Kimberly Blake (*Lady Larkin*), Stiofan O’Doherty (*Sir Harry*), Daniel Bartlett (*Jester*)



“A whimsical and charming alternative to traditional pantomime” was the general verdict on this second revival.

Original London run: Adelphi Theatre, September 1960

First revival: Landor, May 2003

AMERICAN IDIOT

London run: Hammersmith Apollo,
December 4th – 15th

Music & Lyrics: Billie Joe Armstrong

Book: Michael Mayer

Director: Michael Mayer

Choreographer: Steven Hoggett

Musical Director: Evan Jay Newman

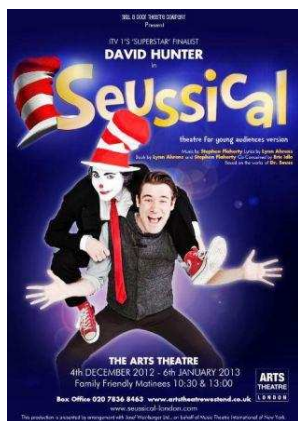
Cast: Thomas Hettrick (*Tunny*),
Casey O'Farrell (*Will*),
Alex Nee (*Johnny*),
Trent Saunders (*St. Jimmy*),
Alyssa DiPalma (*Whatsername*),
Jenna Rubaii (*Extraordinary Girl*)



Songs: Jesus of Suburbia, Boulevard of Broken Dreams, St Jimmy, She's a Rebel, Wake Me Up When September Ends, Letterbomb, Whatsername, Give Me Novocaine, Extraordinary Girl,

Story: This is the story of three young suburban friends in post 9/11 America trying to find some fun and some meaning in their lives. Tunny joins the army and ends up hospitalised in the Iraq war; Will stays at home and drifts into reluctant fatherhood and alcoholism; Johnny heads for the big city's temptations, and as his heroin addiction takes effect, he magics up St. Jimmy, a kind of alter-ego and devil on his shoulder. So unconnected are these men, even their girl-friends exist as objects called "Whatsername" and "Extraordinary Woman".

Notes: This was a staging of Green Day's best-selling 2004 punk-rock album with some additional songs from their back catalogue. Originally staged by the Berkeley Repertory Theater in September 2009, the production transferred to Broadway with previews from March 24th 2010. It ran just over a year, playing 27 previews and 421 regular performances, and won two technical Tony Awards as well as a nomination for Best Musical. Following a USA national tour, the all-American company came to the UK playing outside London in what was described as a combination of jukebox-musical, sung-through rock opera and stadium concert. This two-week London run was its farewell appearance. Elaborately staged with top-quality musical accompaniment and exciting choreography, it was a great success with fans of punk rock. Others amongst the critics gave it a miss.



SEUSSICAL

London run: Arts Theatre, December 6th—January 6th 2013

Music: Stephen Flaherty

Book & Lyrics: Lynn Ahrens

Additional material: Eric Idle

Director: Phillip Rowntree

Choreographer: Cressida Carre

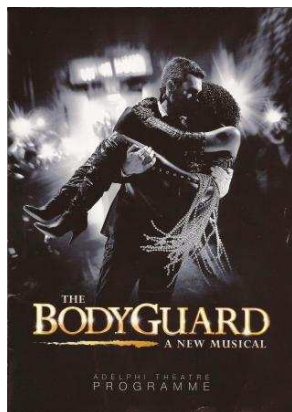
Musical Director: Joe Morrow

Cast: David Hunter (*Horton*), Clark Devlin (*Jojo*), Jessica Parker (*Mayzie la Bird*),
Joe Morrow (*Cat in the Hat*), Kirsty Marie Ayers (*Gertrude McFuzz*), Natalie Green

Story: Horton the Elephant discovers a small world floating out of control on a speck of dust. Living in this world are the "Whos", including Jojo, a Who with "thinks" that are very special. Horton has to save Jojo and the Whos, but he must also guard a precious egg abandoned by Mayzie La Bird. But, with the Cat in the Hat and Gertrude McFuzz to help, all is not lost.

Songs: Oh the Thinks you can Think, Horton Hears a Who, Here on Who, How to Raise a Child, Egg Nest and Tree, Maizie in Palm Beach.

Notes: After workshops in New York and Toronto, and a Boston try-out, this musical version of some Dr Seuss children's stories was first performed on Broadway on 30 November 2000. It received lukewarm reviews, with complaints about its huge cast of characters and unsympathetic plotlines. It closed on 20 May 2001 after 198 performances and 34 previews. Following the Broadway production, the script was extensively re-written, characters and songs were dropped, the role of Jojo was extensively altered, and the new version enjoyed some success in touring productions and in the regional and amateur theatres in the USA. Further re-writing and alteration was undertaken for an off-Broadway revival which ran for one month from July 2007. It was this scaled-down, more child-friendly version with certain British adaptations which received its London premiere



THE BODYGUARD

London run: Adelphi, December 5th - August 29th, 2014

Music & Lyrics: Various

Book: Alex Dineleris

Original Screenplay: Lawrence Kasdan

Director: Thea Sharrock

Choreographer: Arthur Pita

Musical Director: Richard Beadle

Producer: Michael Harrison & David Ian

Cast: Heather Headley (*Rachel Marron*), Lloyd Owen (*Frank Farmer*), Ray Shell (*Bill Devaney*), Nicolas Colicos (*Tony Scipelli*), Debbie Kurup (*Nikki Marron*), Mark Letheren (*The Stalker*), Mark McKeraccher (*Herb Farmer*), Dean Chapman, David Page, Oliver le Sueur.

Songs: I Will Always Love You, All at Once, All the Man I Need, How Will I Know, I Have Nothing, I'm Every Woman, I'm Your Baby Tonight, I Wanna Dance with Somebody, Jesus Loves Me, One Moment in Time, Queen of the Night, Saving All My Love

Story: Rachel Marron is a top movie star who is being stalked and receiving death threats. Frank Farmer is a former Secret Service Agent once detailed to protect the USA President, and haunted by the fact that he was off-duty when Regan was shot. He now works as a bodyguard for VIPS and has been hired by Rachel's manager, Bill Devaney, to protect the star. He regards her as a difficult and spoiled diva. She sees him as paranoid, with intrusive demands on her freedom. The existing bodyguard, Tony Scipelli, sees him as a rival. Gradually Rachel and Frank fall in love, something that Frank cannot allow since it will compromise his professional duties. Their relationship is also hindered by assassination attempts, intrigues, jealousies and bomb attacks, as well as the efforts of his former colleague to break up the romance and to win Rachel for himself. The climax arrives at the Oscar ceremony with a psychotic gunman stalking the heroine, followed by a surprise, tear-jerking ending.

Notes: Based on the 1992 film, a romantic thriller starring Whitney Houston and Kevin Costner, the stage adaptation features songs recorded by Whitney Houston (who died at the age of 48 in February 2012.) It opened to very mixed reviews: "one more example of the necrophiliac musical morbidly attracted to a cinematic corpse" (Guardian); "dross with a gloss, and proof that if you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, you can sometimes come surprisingly close," (Telegraph); "absurd and hugely enjoyable. . . brilliantly clever" (Times). However, there was unanimous acclaim for the American leading lady, Heather Headley – described as an utterly compelling, mesmerizing star, who performed the songs even better than Whitney Houston herself. The overall view was that this would be a hit show. (During matinees and one night a week, the role of Rachel was played by Gloria Onitiri.)

Despite the reviews the advance sales quickly rose to £4m and the run was extended. Heather Headley left the cast in August 2013, with Gloria Onitiri playing the role temporarily until September. The role was then played by Beverley Knight (until June 2014) and by Alexandra Burke for the remainder of the run. Tristan Gemmill took over as Frank from September 2013.

The show closed on August 29th 2014, having come to the end of its contract with the theatre. For a while it was thought it would transfer to the Aldwych, but, with 350 fewer seats, that venue was felt to be financially unviable. Plans were announced for a major UK touring version to open early in 2015.



VIVA FOREVER

London run: Piccadilly Theatre, December 11th – June 29th 2013

Music & Lyrics: Various

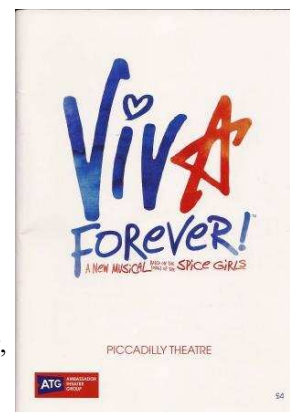
Book: Jennifer Saunders

Director: Paul Garrington

Choreographer: Lynne Page

Musical Director: John Donovan

Cast: Hannah John-Kamen (*Viva*), Dominique Provost-Chalkley (*Holly*), Lucy Phelps (*Diamond*), Siobhan Athwal (*Luce*), Sally Ann Triplett (*Lauren*), Lucy Montgomery (*Suzi*), Sally Dexter (*Simone*), Bill Ward (*Johnny*), Simon Slater, Simon Adkins, Hatty Preston, Tamara Wall, Anthony Topham, Charlotte Gorton, Ben Cura.



Songs: Denying, Do It, Goodbye, Headlines. Let Love Lead the Way, Look at Me, Mama, Move Over, Right Back at Ya, Saturday Night Divas, Say You'll be There, Something Kinda Funny, Spice Up Your Life, The Lady is a Vamp, Tell Me Why, Too Much, Wannabe. 2 Become 1

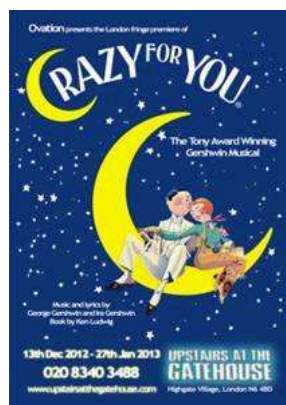
Story: Viva and her friends Holly, Diamond and Luce attempt to reach the top via an X-Factor type TV talent show. However, it is Viva who is offered the chance to go solo, and who then dumps her friends in order to "live the dream". Other characters are Lauren, Viva's feisty adoptive mother, and Lauren's friend Suzi, as well as the talent show judges Simone and Johnny (shades of Sharon Osbourne and Simon Cowell). Sub-plots involve a romance between Lauren and an English chauffeur she meets in Italy and, of course, whether Viva will eventually realise that friendship is worth more than fame.

Notes: This jukebox musical of Spice Girl hits was produced by Judy Cramer, who had been responsible for the worldwide success of the Abba jukebox show, "Mamma Mia". Based on her established success and the power of the Spice Girls name, as well as the reputation of scriptwriter Jennifer Saunders, the show began previews on 27th November 2012 to a huge advance – said to be £4 million. With a cast of over thirty performers and the enormous hype of the Spice Girls attending the official opening in December 11th, this was expected to be the big hit of the season.

This was not to be. The reviews were almost unanimously damning: "tawdry, lazy and unedifying" (Telegraph), "scrappy, lazy, clichéd" (Times), "a piece of music theatre so insultingly shoddy that it makes your average infant school nativity play look like Sondheim" (Guardian). Despite several attempts at rewriting and re-vamping the show following its critical drubbing, it closed on 29th June 2013, after just seven months, and with a loss of around £5 million.



Photo by Viva Forever



CRAZY FOR YOU (2nd Revival)

London run: Gatehouse, December 13th - January 27th 2013

Music: George Gershwin

Lyrics: Ira Gershwin

Book: Ken Ludwig

Director: John Plews

Choreographer: Grant Murphy

Musical Director: Oliver John Ruthven

Cast: Jay Rincorn (*Bobby Child*), Ceili O'Connor (*Polly Baker*), Natalie Lipin (*Irene Roth*), James Doughty (*Bela Zangler*), Ben Bazell (*Everett Baker*), Simon Ouldred, Ricky Morrel, Tamsin Dowsett, Anthony Williamson

Notes: The full-scale production from Regent's Park via the Novello had closed just nine months earlier, and here was yet another version in the London area, though the first time it had been staged in a tiny fringe theatre. With a cast of 14 and a number of newcomers in the cast, it was hailed as a very energetic and entertaining crowd-pleaser.

Original London run: Prince Edward, March, 1993

First revival: Open Air, regent's Park, August 2011
(Transfer Novello)



Photo by Minyahl Giorgis

WAR OF THE WORLDS – The New Generation

London run: O2, December 15th (One night only)

Music & Lyrics: Jeff Wayne

Original story: H.G. Wells

Musical Director: Jeff Wayne

Cast: Liam Neeson (*Holographic performance*), Ricky Wilson, Marti Pellow, Will Stapleton, Jason Donovan, Kerry Ellis, Michael Falzon, Lily Osborne.



Notes: Jeff Wayne's musical version of H.G. Wells's "The War of the Worlds" was originally a 1978 concept album combining progressive rock and string orchestra – a two disc album which sold millions of copies around the world. A live arena tour, based on the album, began in the UK in April 2006, with a projected image of a "virtual" Richard Burton as narrator, and performers including Russell Watson, Alexis James and Tara Blaise. The 2006 London show at the Wembley Arena was released on a DVD. This first version was revived at various times in 2007, playing Australia and New Zealand and returning to the UK in December. A 30th Anniversary tour opened in Dublin in June 2009. Artists appearing during these performances included Justin Hayward, Chris Thompson, Alexis James, John Payne, Sinéad Quinn, Shannon Noll, Damien Edwards and Jennifer Ellison.

"The War of the Worlds – the New Generation" was a 2012 follow-up album, where Jeff Wayne decided to return to his score and re-create it for a new generation of audiences, as well as re-launch the live tour throughout the UK and Europe. This tour opened in Liverpool Echo Arena on December 1st. and played a series of UK dates through to January. The planned German and Belgium tour announced for January 2013 was postponed, but according to the press release, would be re-scheduled at a later date.

SALAD DAYS (8th Revival)

London run: Riverside Studios, December 21st – March 2nd, 2013

Music: Julian Slade

Lyrics & Book: Julian Slade & Dorothy Reynolds

Director: Bill Bankes-Jones

Choreographer: Quinny Sacks

Musical Director: Anthony Ingle

Cast: Matthew Hawsworth (*Tramp*), Katie Moore (*Jane*), Leo Miles (*Timothy*), Lee Boggess (*Troppo*), Charlie Cameron, Nicholas Collier, Mark Inscoc, Richard Kent, Kathryn Martin, Tom Millen, Katie Moore, Gemma Page, Ellie Robertson, Tanya Stephens, Tony Timberlake, Josephine Warren

Back again with almost the same cast as two years before – this time for an ambitious ten-week season.

Notes: Original Production ,
Vaudeville Theatre, Aug 1954;

1st Revival: Prince's Theatre, Dec 1961;
2nd Revival: Lyric, Hammersmith, Aug 1964;
3rd Revival: Duke of York's, April 14 1976;
4th Revival: Vaudeville Theatre, April 1996;
5th Revival: Greenwich Theatre, Oct 2006
6th Revival: Riverside Studios, Nov 2009
7th Revival: Riverside Studios, Dec 2010

Leo Miles and Katie Moore



Photo by Roy Tan