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WHERE
TO GO

LONDON THEATRELAND



YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
THE BEST SHOWS, THEATRES AND MUSICALS
IN THE WEST END AND BEYOND

THE
SHOW
MUST
GO ON

Les
Miserables



HAMILTON

PHANTOM
OF THE
OPERA



WEST
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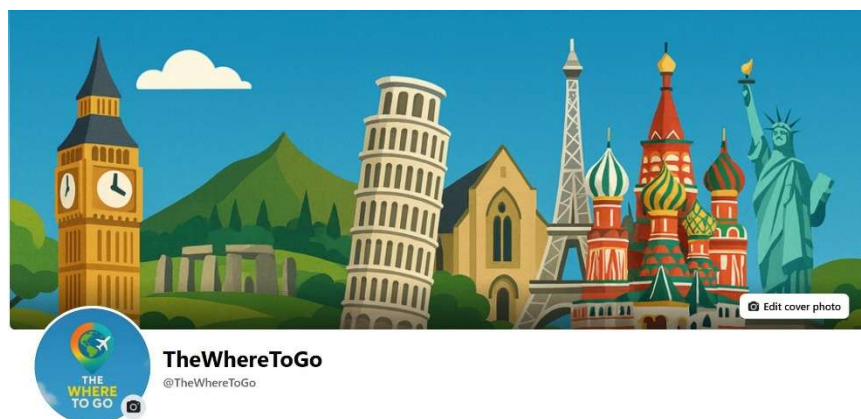
Welcome to The Where To Go



This guide is just one of a series of travel guides under 'The Where To Go' banner. You can also find curated videos of the many different places visited on my YouTube channel as well as www.TheWhereToGo.com. Please feel free to like and subscribe.



You will also find up to date information about my worldwide travels on my dedicated Facebook page at www.facebook.com/TheWhereToGo.



Welcome to London Theatreland

The magic of London's theatre scene is that it never stands still. New productions open every month, established favourites refresh their casts, limited runs come and go, and every performance offers something slightly different from the last. For that reason, this guide has been designed rather differently from a traditional book.

Rather than becoming out of date almost as soon as it is printed, London Theatreland is intended to be a living guide. New reviews, additional theatres, updated ratings, fresh photography and the latest productions will be added on a regular basis, ensuring that the guide continues to grow and evolve. In many ways, this is a work in progress.....and I hope it always will be.

The reviews in these pages are based on my own visits to London's theatres and reflect my personal opinions. Theatre is wonderfully subjective, however, and what delights one person may leave another unconvinced. That diversity of opinion is part of what makes live performance so special.

To keep up to date with the latest editions, additional reviews and new theatre features, I invite you to visit and subscribe to The Where To Go at www.thewheretogo.com. There you'll find updated versions of this guide, together with travel guides, destination articles and documentary-style videos from around the world.

I'd also love to hear your thoughts. If you've seen one of the productions featured in this guide.....or perhaps discovered another London gem, then please share your own thoughts and ratings through the website. Your feedback, recommendations and suggestions will help shape future editions, making this guide an even more valuable resource for theatre lovers everywhere.

So, whether you're planning your very first trip to London Theatreland or you're a seasoned regular, I hope these pages inspire you to book a ticket and discover your next unforgettable theatrical experience.

This guide:

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This guide is regularly updated. Visit www.thewheretogo.com for the latest edition.

PRESENTLY SHOWING

The following recommended productions are now showing in London

Avenue Q at the Shaftesbury Theatre



Beetlejuice at the Prince Edward Theatre



The Book of Mormon at the Prince of Wales Theatre



The Devil Wears Prada at the Dominion Theatre



Hamilton at the Victoria Palace Theatre



Jesus Christ Superstar at the London Palladium



Les Miserables at the Sondheim Theatre



The Lion King at the Lyceum



Moulin Rouge at the Piccadilly Theatre



Oh Mary! at the Trafalgar Theatre



Oliver at the Gielgud Theatre



Paddington : The Musical at the Savoy Theatre



Phantom of the Opera at His Majesty's Theatre.



The Producers at the Garrick Theatre



Titanique at the Criterion Theatre



War Horse at the National Theatre





Avenue Q at the Shaftesbury Theatre

Avenue Q takes the innocent world of children's television and gives it a thoroughly adult makeover a no-holds-barred satire made famous by South Park. The result is funny and original. Playing at London's Shaftesbury Theatre, this irreverent production takes the familiar world of puppet characters and turns it completely on its head with sharp wit, outrageous humour and heartfelt storytelling.

At first glance it looks like a family-friendly puppet show, but within minutes it becomes abundantly clear that this is very much a musical for adults. Nothing is off limits as the show gleefully tackles relationships, careers, prejudice, internet addiction and the struggle to find purpose in life. The songs are well written and packed with clever lyrics that are as memorable as they are hilarious.

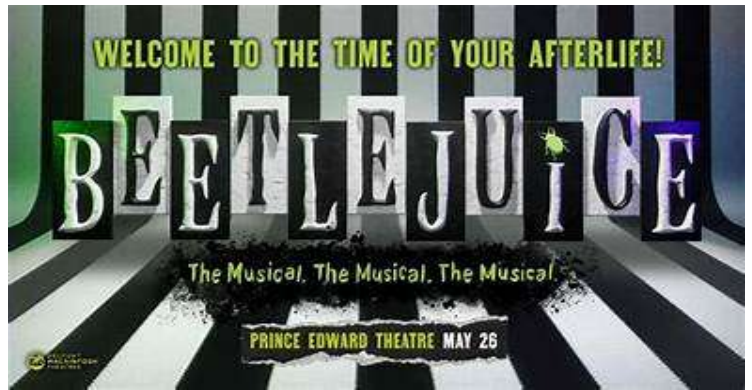
The cast effortlessly switch between operating their puppets and delivering polished vocal performances, creating characters that are instantly believable. The undisputed scene-stealer is Lucy the Slut, the outrageously flirtatious cabaret singer whose every appearance had the audience roaring with laughter. Bold, shameless and gloriously over the top, Lucy delivers some of the show's funniest moments.

Beneath the outrageous jokes and adult humour lies a surprisingly warm and optimistic message about growing up, accepting life's imperfections and discovering that nobody really has everything figured out. Avenue Q is clever, fearless and entertaining, proving that puppets aren't just for children. If you're prepared for an evening of politically incorrect comedy, then this is a show that will leave you smiling long after the curtain falls.



Beetlejuice at the Prince Edward Theatre

Bringing Tim Burton's weird world to the West End, Beetlejuice is a musical that doesn't try to play by the rules. Loud, chaotic and packed with visual spectacle, it throws everything at the audience from the very first scene. While it may not instantly win everyone over, this is a production that steadily grows on you as the story unfolds, revealing far more heart than its outrageous exterior first suggests.



Based on the much-loved 1988 film, the musical follows the recently deceased Maitlands as they attempt to haunt their former home, only to encounter the mischievous and utterly unpredictable Beetlejuice. Alongside them is the grieving teenager Lydia Deetz, whose loneliness provides the emotional core of the show.

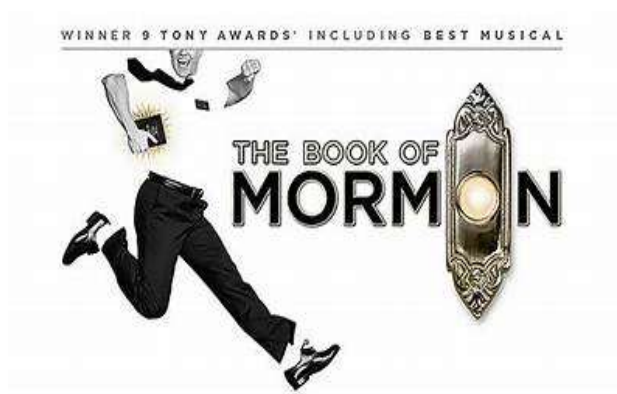
The production is a visual feast. The sets constantly transform, the costumes perfectly capture Burton's gothic imagination, and the special effects are both inventive and surprisingly convincing. Every scene offers something new to admire, creating a world that is delightfully bizarre without ever becoming confusing.

As the evening progresses, the humour becomes sharper, the characters more engaging and the songs increasingly memorable. What initially feels like relentless chaos gradually finds its rhythm, allowing the emotional moments to land with genuine impact. Beneath the dark comedy lies a thoughtful story about grief, family and learning to embrace life, however messy it may be.

The cast throw themselves wholeheartedly into the production, balancing manic comedy with impressive vocal performances. Beetlejuice may not be a musical that wins you over in its opening minutes but give it time and it rewards your patience. By the final curtain, the production has found its stride, delivering an entertaining mix of humour, spectacle and surprising warmth.



The Book of Mormon at the Prince of Wales Theatre



Few musicals divide opinion quite like *The Book of Mormon*. Created by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the minds behind *South Park*, together with Robert Lopez, co-creator of *Avenue Q*. This is a show that delights in pushing boundaries. It is unapologetically politically incorrect, relentlessly irreverent and, in my view, laugh-out-loud funny from beginning to end.

The story follows two young Mormon missionaries who are sent from the comfort of Salt Lake City to a remote village in Uganda. Armed with boundless optimism but little understanding of the world they are about to encounter, the pair find themselves in increasingly absurd situations. The result is a musical that satirises organised religion, Western culture and human nature with equal enthusiasm.

The humour is outrageous, often shocking and deliberately provocative. Nothing seems to be off limits, with jokes arriving at such a relentless pace that it is almost impossible not to laugh, even when you know you probably shouldn't. Yet beneath the outrageous comedy lies an unexpectedly clever and surprisingly uplifting story about friendship, compassion and the importance of hope.

The performances are superb, requiring impeccable comic timing alongside impressive singing and dancing. The cast embraces the material with infectious energy, delivering one memorable musical number after another. The production values are every bit as polished as any traditional West End musical, making the contrast between the wholesome presentation and the outrageous content even funnier.

This certainly isn't everyone's cup of tea. If you are easily offended by satire involving religion, politics, race or social issues, this is probably one to avoid. However, if you appreciate fearless comedy and are willing to leave your sensitivities at the theatre door, *The Book of Mormon* offers one of the funniest evenings the West End has to offer.

Bold, brilliantly written and completely unashamed of its sense of humour, this is a musical that continues to shock audiences while earning standing ovations. You may occasionally gasp in disbelief, but chances are you'll be laughing far too hard to care.



The Devil Wears Prada at the Dominion Theatre

Turning one of the most stylish films ever made into a stage musical was always going to be a daunting challenge. Fortunately, *The Devil Wears Prada* understands exactly what audiences want: glamour, wit, memorable characters and, above all, fabulous fashion. The result is a dazzling West End spectacle that places style centre stage without losing sight of the story at its heart.



The first thing that strikes you is the extraordinary costume design. Gregg Barnes has created a wardrobe worthy of the Runway fashion empire, with a seemingly endless parade of designer-inspired outfits, elegant gowns, immaculate tailoring and jaw-dropping quick changes. Every entrance brings another visual surprise, making the costumes as much a star of the show as the performers themselves. They perfectly capture the glamour and excess of the fashion world while helping to define each character's personality.

The production also benefits from an exceptionally large and energetic company. The ensemble rarely leaves the stage for long, filling every scene with movement, confidence and personality. Whether transforming the Dominion stage into the bustling offices of Runway magazine, the streets of New York or the glamour of Paris Fashion Week, the cast creates a world that feels vibrant, busy and constantly alive. Slick choreography and seamless scene changes ensure the production never loses momentum.

Vanessa Williams is perfectly cast as the icy yet magnetic Miranda Priestly, commanding every scene with effortless authority, while the supporting cast bring warmth, humour and plenty of sparkle. Elton John's score provides an enjoyable soundtrack, even if it never quite reaches the iconic status of some of his earlier musicals.

Ultimately, *The Devil Wears Prada* succeeds because it embraces spectacle. It is a feast for the eyes, packed with fashion, colour and theatrical flair. If you love big West End productions with stunning visuals and a cast that fills every corner of the stage, this is one show that is always dressed to impress.



Hamilton at the Victoria Palace Theatre

Some musicals are so packed with ideas, references and lyrical complexity that they almost demand a second viewing. *Hamilton* is one of them. While I admired the production on my first visit, it was only after reading about the American Revolution and the remarkable life of Alexander Hamilton that I truly appreciated just how clever and ambitious this musical really was.

Lin-Manuel Miranda has transformed what might seem an unlikely subject—the life of one of America's Founding Fathers—into one of the most innovative musicals ever written. Blending hip-hop, rap, R&B and traditional musical theatre, the score tells a fast-paced story that rewards close attention. Knowing the historical background allows many of the witty lyrics, political rivalries and subtle references to land with far greater impact.

The production itself is superb. The staging is deceptively simple yet endlessly inventive. David Korins' wooden set, centred around its revolving stage, allows scenes to flow seamlessly from one to the next. Combined with Andy Blankenbuehler's breathtaking choreography, it creates a production that is constantly in motion, perfectly matching the relentless pace of the score.

At its heart, however, *Hamilton* is more than a history lesson. It explores ambition, legacy, love, sacrifice and the price of political success. The relationships between Hamilton, Eliza, Angelica Burr and Washington provide genuine emotional depth alongside the dazzling wordplay and infectious music.

This is not a musical that simply washes over you. It asks you to listen, think and engage. For some, that may make it less immediately accessible than more traditional West End shows, but the rewards are considerable. My second visit proved far more satisfying than the first, confirming *Hamilton* as one of the most original, intelligent and exhilarating productions currently playing in London's West End. It is a musical that becomes richer the more you understand the remarkable story behind it.



Jesus Christ Superstar at the London Palladium



I have just returned home from the London Palladium after an outstanding evening watching Sam Ryder in the West End revival of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. It is remarkable to think that this groundbreaking rock opera premiered on Broadway in 1971 before opening in London's West End the following year. More than half a century later, it has lost none of its power and is attracting a lot less protests than when it first opened.

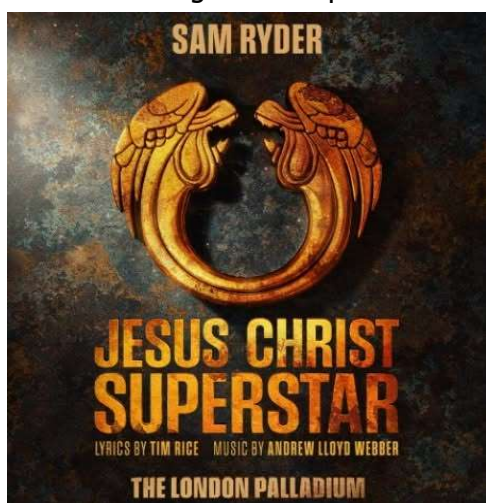
This award-winning production, transferred from Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, embraces simplicity. The minimalist staging, dominated by towering scaffolding, provides a striking backdrop to the biblical narrative without ever distracting from it. Atmospheric lighting, a superb live orchestra and exhilarating choreography combine to create a production that is both intimate and epic.

The performances are exceptional throughout. Desmonda Cathabel brings warmth, vulnerability and vocal beauty to Mary Magdalene, while Tyrone Huntley delivers a captivating Judas whose emotional conflict lies at the heart of the production. Sam Ryder proves that his transition from pop star (and Eurovision singer) to leading man is entirely convincing. His portrayal of Jesus is both commanding and deeply human.

What makes this revival so compelling is its confidence. Rather than relying on elaborate scenery or spectacle, director Timothy Sheader allows the music, choreography and performances to carry the emotional weight. The result is a production that feels fresh, immediate and surprisingly relevant, proving that a musical written more than fifty years ago can still speak powerfully to a modern audience.

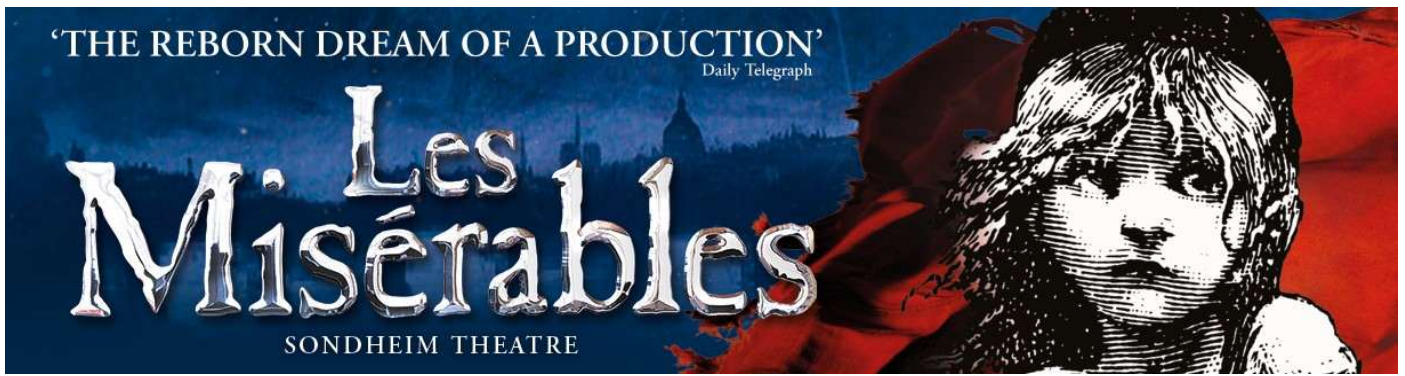
One of the production's most inspired ideas is the casting of King Herod. Rather than employing a single actor throughout the run, the role is shared by a series of celebrity guest stars including Jesse Tyler Ferguson (who had the role this evening and is best known as Mitchell from *Modern Family*), Richard Armitage, Simon Russell Beale, Boy George, Layton Williams and Julian Clary.

The audience itself reflected the musical's enduring appeal. Younger theatre-goers, many no doubt drawn by Sam Ryder's considerable fan base, sat alongside those of us who have loved this score for decades and can still recall every word of classics such as *I Don't Know How to Love Him*, *Gethsemane* and *Superstar*. It was heartening to see a production bridging generations so effortlessly.



Quite simply, this is musical theatre at its finest. Whether you are discovering *Jesus Christ Superstar* for the first time or returning to a much-loved classic, this production is well worth seeing. The production continues at the London Palladium until 5 September 2026 before transferring to the Theatre Royal Drury Lane from 16 October 2026 until 9 January 2027 because the demand for tickets has been so great. I would not be surprised if it enjoys a longer life beyond January 2027.

Les Miserables (Les Mis) at the Sondheim Theatre



More than four decades after its London premiere, this extraordinary production continues to set the standard for epic musical theatre. The Sondheim Theatre has been its home since 2004, and the musical remains every bit as powerful, moving and relevant as when it first captivated audiences. The current production, inspired by the acclaimed 25th Anniversary staging, combines breathtaking simplicity with spectacular theatricality including projections based on Victor Hugo's own artwork.

Based on Victor Hugo's monumental novel, the story follows the life of former convict Jean Valjean, whose search for redemption is relentlessly pursued by the uncompromising Inspector Javert. Against the backdrop of post-revolutionary France, their lives become intertwined with a rich cast of unforgettable characters, including the tragic Fantine, the spirited young revolutionary Enjolras, the mischievous (and hilarious) Thénardiens and the idealistic lovers Marius and Cosette. It is a story of justice, sacrifice, forgiveness and hope that resonates across every generation.

Claude-Michel Schönberg's soaring score, with lyrics by Alain Boublil and Herbert Kretzmer's celebrated English adaptation, is one of the greatest ever written for the musical stage. Songs such as I Dreamed a Dream, On My Own, Bring Him Home, One Day More and Do You Hear the People Sing? are not merely showstoppers but integral chapters in the unfolding drama. Each number deepens the emotional connection between audience and characters, creating a theatrical experience of remarkable intensity.

At its heart is Jean Valjean, one of musical theatre's greatest roles. His journey from embittered prisoner to compassionate guardian forms the emotional backbone of the production. Javert provides an equally compelling counterpoint, his unwavering belief in justice ultimately becoming his undoing. Around them, every principal and ensemble performer contributes to a richly textured production.

The orchestra delivers Schönberg's sweeping score with tremendous richness and precision, while the direction maintains a relentless momentum across nearly three hours of storytelling. Moments of intimate heartbreak are balanced by scenes of thrilling spectacle, particularly during the student uprising, where the barricades become the setting for some of the most stirring sequences ever staged in a musical.

The Sondheim Theatre provides a fitting home for this legendary production. Its elegant Edwardian interior creates an intimate atmosphere despite the scale of the story unfolding on stage, allowing audiences to become fully immersed in Hugo's world from the opening moments.



The Lion King at the Lyceum

Few musicals have achieved the legendary status of The Lion King. More than two decades after its West End debut, it remains one of London's most breathtaking theatrical experiences, combining imagination, artistry and emotion to create a production that captivates audiences all ages.

From the moment the animals make their unforgettable entrance through the auditorium during the opening number, Circle of Life, it is clear that this is no ordinary musical. Julie Taymor's visionary direction and costume design blur the boundaries between actor, puppet and animal, creating an African landscape that feels both magical and completely believable. Giraffes stride elegantly across the stage, elephants tower above the audience and flocks of birds soar overhead, leaving many first-time visitors wondering how such theatrical wizardry is even possible.

The performances are exceptional throughout, bringing warmth, humour and genuine emotion to this timeless coming-of-age story. Simba's journey from carefree cub to responsible king is told with heart and conviction, while favourites such as Timon and Pumbaa provide perfectly judged comic relief. The ensemble deserves enormous praise, filling the stage with energy and colour while executing intricate choreography that never fails to impress.

Elton John and Tim Rice's unforgettable songs have lost none of their appeal. Classics including Circle of Life, Hakuna Matata, I Just Can't Wait to Be King and Can You Feel the Love Tonight are performed with infectious enthusiasm and are beautifully complemented by Lebo M's evocative African-inspired choral music, giving the production a rich and distinctive musical identity.

The Lyceum Theatre provides the perfect home for this spectacular production, immersing the audience in a world where every detail has been carefully considered. This is theatre on the grandest scale, yet it never loses sight of the heartfelt story at its centre.

The Lion King is one of those rare productions that deserves every accolade it has received. Visually stunning, musically glorious and emotionally uplifting, it is not simply one of the best family shows in London—it is one of the finest musicals ever to grace the West End.





Moulin Rouge at the Piccadilly Theatre

From the moment you step into the Piccadilly Theatre, it's clear that Moulin Rouge! The Musical is more than just a show....it is an experience. The auditorium has been transformed into the legendary Parisian nightclub, with the stage extending into the audience, a giant windmill overlooking the stalls and the iconic blue elephant completing the spectacular scene. Long before the curtain rises, the cabaret atmosphere immerses you in the glamorous, bohemian world of Montmartre.

Based on Baz Luhrmann's dazzling 2001 film, the musical tells the tragic love story of Christian, an idealistic young writer, and Satine, the sparkling star of the Moulin Rouge. While the story remains faithful to the film, the stage version refreshes the soundtrack with an ever-expanding collection of modern pop classics alongside the songs that made the film so memorable.

The score is one of the production's greatest strengths. Beloved numbers such as Lady Marmalade, Come What May and Your Song sit comfortably alongside contemporary hits woven seamlessly into energetic musical mash-ups. Every song feels familiar, and the sheer quality of the vocals ensures each one lands with real emotional impact.

Visually, the production is breathtaking. Lavish costumes, dramatic lighting and inventive choreography combine to create a feast for the senses. The ensemble rarely leaves the stage, filling every scene with movement, colour and excitement, while the principal cast bring warmth and chemistry to the central love story.

Some may find the plot relatively straightforward, but that's almost beside the point. Moulin Rouge! is about spectacle, romance and music, and it delivers all three in abundance. It is glamorous, exhilarating and unapologetically extravagant.

Whether you're a fan of the film or discovering the story for the first time, this is a production that captures the heart as much as the eye. It is a joyous celebration of love, music and theatrical spectacle that leaves audiences humming its unforgettable songs long after the final curtain.



Oh Mary! at the Trafalgar Theatre



invention.

Every so often a play arrives that leaves you wondering not simply how it was written, but how anyone had the confidence to put it on stage. *Oh, Mary!* is one of those rare theatrical experiences – gloriously absurd, outrageously funny and completely unlike anything else currently playing in the West End.

Cole Escola's Tony Award-winning comedy takes a wrecking ball to American history, imagining Mary Todd Lincoln not as the dignified First Lady of history books but as a hopelessly self-absorbed, gin-soaked aspiring cabaret performer trapped in the White House in the days leading up to Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Historical accuracy is totally abandoned in favour of anarchic comedy, and the result is an 80-minute whirlwind of camp, farce and sheer theatrical

The humour is relentless. Physical comedy, razor-sharp one-liners and increasingly ridiculous situations build into a crescendo of beautifully controlled chaos. It is certainly not a show for everyone....its knowingly juvenile humour, queer sensibility and complete disregard for historical fact have divided critics. However, those willing to embrace its insanity are rewarded with one of the funniest evenings currently available in London.

The performances are fearless. Mary (played wonderfully by Mason Alexandra Park when I visited) dominates the stage with astonishing comic timing, switching effortlessly between narcissistic diva, tragic dreamer and unhinged alcoholic, while the supporting cast match the production's manic energy without ever descending into caricature. Sam Pinkleton's direction ensures that every outrageous gag lands with precision, keeping the pace breathless throughout.

Despite its relentless silliness, there is an unexpected poignancy beneath the madness. Mary's desperate desire to escape the role society has assigned her gives the comedy an emotional thread that occasionally surfaces between the laughter.

Running for just 80 minutes without an interval, *Oh, Mary!* never outstays its welcome. It is bold, bizarre and brilliantly original—a reminder that theatre can still surprise audiences in ways that film and television rarely manage. You may leave questioning your sanity, but you'll almost certainly leave laughing





Oliver at the Gielgud Theatre

I must admit that Oliver! was never high on my list of West End musicals to see. Having grown up with the famous film and knowing many of the songs by heart, I wondered whether a stage production could offer anything new. I could not have been more mistaken. This superb revival proved to be one of the most enjoyable surprises of my theatre-going year.

Based on Charles Dickens' Oliver Twist, Lionel Bart's classic musical follows the young orphan Oliver as he escapes the workhouse and finds himself in Victorian London's underworld, where he encounters the charismatic but morally ambiguous Fagin, the Artful Dodger and the sinister Bill Sikes. It is a story that balances humour and warmth with genuine darkness, never shying away from the harsh realities of Dickens' London.

The production bursts with energy from the opening moments. The large ensemble creates a wonderfully vibrant Victorian world, with bustling street scenes, lively choreography and beautifully detailed sets transporting the audience straight into nineteenth-century London. The musical numbers are delivered with infectious enthusiasm, and favourites such as Food, Glorious Food, Consider Yourself, I'd Do Anything, Who Will Buy? and As Long As He Needs Me received rapturous applause.

The performance that truly elevates the evening, however, is Fagin with Simon Lipkin taking the role when I went. Often portrayed simply as a comic rogue, here he becomes a wonderfully rounded charactercunning, witty and endlessly entertaining, yet also surprisingly vulnerable. Every appearance commands attention, and his comic timing is impeccable. Songs including You've Got to Pick a Pocket or Two and Reviewing the Situation become genuine highlights, performed with remarkable warmth and charisma.

The younger members of the cast are equally impressive. Oliver is portrayed with innocence and determination, while the Artful Dodger brings boundless confidence and charm. Nancy provides the show's emotional centre, and Bill Sikes remains a genuinely intimidating presence whose menace gives the story real dramatic weight.

Musically, the orchestra captures the richness of Lionel Bart's unforgettable score, while the direction strikes an excellent balance between spectacle, comedy and heartfelt emotion. Although Oliver! has long been regarded as one of Britain's greatest musicals, this production reminds audiences exactly why it has earned that reputation.

I arrived expecting an enjoyable evening built largely on nostalgia. Instead, I left having experienced one of the most entertaining and satisfying productions currently in the West End. This magnificent revival combines exceptional performances, memorable music and first-class storytelling into a show that thoroughly deserves its standing as a British theatrical classic.



Paddington : The Musical at the Savoy Theatre



Bringing one of Britain's most beloved literary characters to the stage was always going to be a formidable challenge, but Paddington: The Musical captures the warmth, humour and gentle optimism that have made the little bear from Peru a national treasure. Faithful to the spirit of Michael Bond's stories while adding plenty of theatrical spectacle, the production succeeds as a family musical with genuine heart.

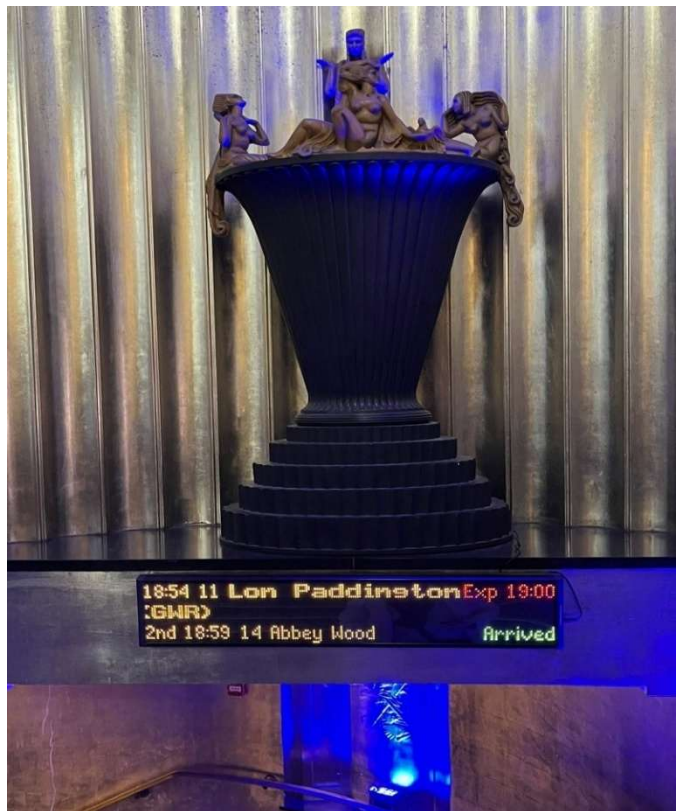
The story follows Paddington's arrival in London, his adoption by the Brown family and his determined efforts to find his place in a bustling city that is not always welcoming. It balances laugh-out-loud comedy with quieter moments of kindness and belonging, ensuring the emotional core of the story is never overshadowed by the production's impressive visuals.

The score is tuneful and memorable, blending lively ensemble numbers with touching ballads that explore themes of home, friendship and acceptance. While not every song lingers long after the curtain falls, the music consistently supports the storytelling and keeps the pace moving.

Visually, the production is a delight. Clever staging, imaginative choreography and inventive costume design bring Paddington's world vividly to life. London itself becomes a character, from the bustle of Paddington Station to the cosy charm of Windsor Gardens.

The cast performs with infectious enthusiasm, but it is Paddington who inevitably steals the show. His innocence, impeccable manners and unwavering belief in the goodness of others remain as appealing on stage as they have always been on the page.

Ultimately, Paddington: The Musical is more than a charming adaptation; it is a celebration of kindness, tolerance and the simple idea that everyone deserves a place to call home. It is an uplifting, beautifully crafted production that appeals to children and adults alike, leaving audiences with smiles on their faces and perhaps a renewed appreciation for marmalade sandwiches.



Phantom of the Opera at His Majesty's Theatre



Some productions become classics because of nostalgia. Others earn that status by continuing to deliver night after night, decade after decade. The Phantom of the Opera firmly belongs in the latter category. Now approaching its fifth decade at His Majesty's Theatre, Andrew Lloyd Webber's masterpiece remains one of the defining experiences of London's West End.

Inspired by Gaston Leroux's 1910 novel, the story unfolds beneath the Paris Opera House, where a mysterious masked figure exerts an almost supernatural influence over the theatre and its performers. When the gifted young soprano Christine Daaé catches his attention, she is drawn into a world of music, manipulation and obsession, leaving her torn between the Phantom's extraordinary genius and the steadfast affection of her childhood friend, Raoul.

Lloyd Webber's score is among the finest ever written for the musical stage. Instantly recognisable melodies flow effortlessly from one scene to the next, from the dramatic title number to the haunting beauty of The Music of the Night, Think of Me, All I Ask of You and Wishing You Were Somehow Here Again. The music is richly orchestrated, emotionally charged and perfectly matched to the gothic atmosphere that surrounds the story.

Visually, the production remains astonishing. Maria Björnson's iconic designs have lost none of their impact, creating an opulent world of grand staircases, candlelit lakes, lavish costumes and atmospheric shadows. The celebrated chandelier sequence still produces audible gasps from the audience, while the journey into the Phantom's subterranean kingdom remains a memorable stage spectacle.

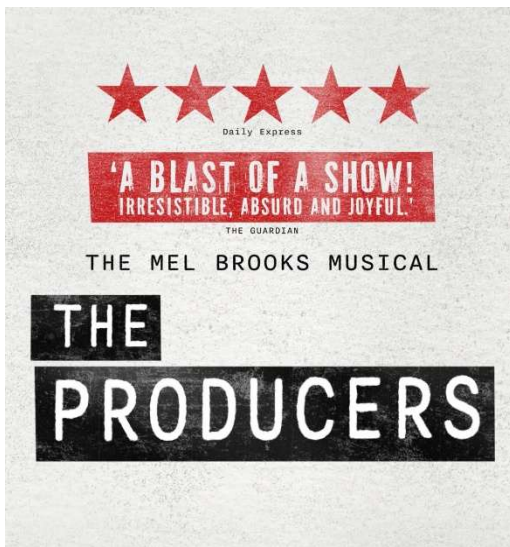
The strength of Phantom lies not only in its production values but also in the emotional complexity of its central characters. The Phantom is neither straightforward villain nor hero; rather he is a lonely, tortured soul whose brilliance is matched only by his desperation to be loved. Christine grows from a timid chorus girl into a confident performer, while Raoul represents compassion, stability and hope. Their intertwined relationships provide the emotional heart beneath the spectacle.

The orchestra deserves special recognition. Performing Lloyd Webber's intricate score with precision and power, the musicians create an almost cinematic sound that fills every corner of His Majesty's Theatre. Combined with exceptional lighting, seamless scene changes and impeccable stagecraft, the production demonstrates why live theatre remains such a compelling art form.

His Majesty's Theatre is the perfect home for the production. Opened in 1897, its richly decorated Edwardian auditorium enhances the sense of occasion from the moment you enter. Few theatres are so closely associated with a single production, and the venue itself has become part of the legend. There are larger spectacles, newer productions and more technically ambitious musicals, but few achieve the complete synthesis of music, storytelling and theatrical magic found in this production.

Nearly forty years after its West End premiere, The Phantom of the Opera continues to captivate audiences with its romance, mystery and unforgettable music. It is not simply a long-running musical, it is one of the great achievements of modern theatre, and every theatre lover should experience it at least once.

The Producers at the Garrick Theatre



It has been over a year since I went to see a production of 'The Producers' which was packing houses at the Menier Chocolate Factory Theatre situated just down the road from London Bridge Station. At the time I asked whether such a risqué production might fall foul of the cancel culture supporters and ever make it to the West Endand, I am pleased to say, that it did...made it to the West End and not fall foul of the cancel culture supporters.

Today, 60 years since the release of the original film, the performance remains as relevant, tasteless and shamefully funny as it ever was. The show's stereotypes haven't changed one bit, but our tolerance certainly has. The sight of swastikas being paraded around the stage and the frequent use of the word gay may be uncomfortable for some, but it brought a guilty smile to my face.

The show tells the story of two Broadway producers who plot to find the worst play ever written so that they can keep the proceeds they have raised from investors when it flops. After all, who would believe that 'Springtime for Hitler' written by a Nazi sympathiser would become a box office sensation for all the worst reasons. So, if you can put up with a crazed Nazi sympathiser, an outrageously camp director and a Swedish secretary with an accent reminiscent of Monty Python then 'The Producers' is for you



Titanique at the Criterion Theatre



If you've ever wondered what would happen if Titanic collided head-on with a Céline Dion concert, a drag cabaret and a stand-up comedy show, Titanique has the gloriously ridiculous answer. This Olivier Award-winning musical parody is one of the funniest nights currently playing in the West End, gleefully throwing historical accuracy overboard in favour of pure entertainment.

The premise is wonderfully absurd. Céline Dion herself takes control of the story, insisting that James Cameron got it all wrong because she was actually on the Titanic and is finally ready to reveal what really happened. From that moment onwards, logic sinks faster than the famous ocean liner, replaced by outrageous comedy, rapid-fire pop culture references and a soundtrack packed with Céline's greatest hits.

Fans of the film will delight in seeing iconic scenes lovingly recreated before being completely turned on their head. Nothing is sacred. Jack, Rose, Cal and even the iceberg become the butt of the joke, while the script constantly breaks for brilliantly timed improvisation and topical references that keep every performance feeling fresh.

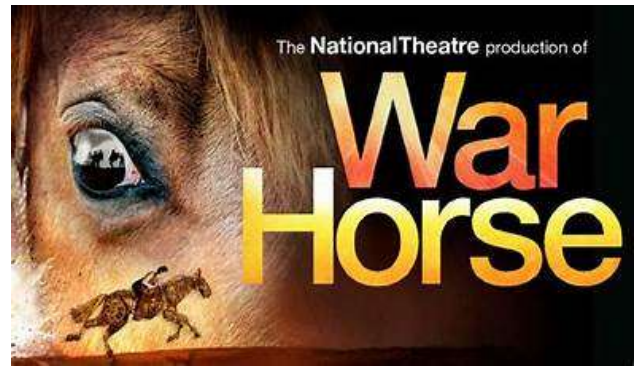
The cast throw themselves into the madness with infectious enthusiasm. The vocals are exceptional throughout, proving that beneath the layers of camp humour lies a company of top-class musical theatre performers. The intimate setting of the Criterion Theatre only adds to the experience, making audiences feel part of the mayhem from the opening moments.

This certainly won't appeal to everyone. The humour is unapologetically camp, knowingly outrageous and occasionally delightfully inappropriate. But if you're willing to leave good taste at the door, you'll be rewarded with a production that is laugh-out-loud funny from beginning to end offering an unforgettable evening of singing and laughing.



War Horse at the National Theatre

Nearly twenty years after it first premiered at the National Theatre, it is great to be back again to the at the National Theatre to see the return of War Horse to the Olivier stage looking every bit the masterpiece it was back in 2007. Few productions have changed modern theatre as profoundly and seeing it back in its original home is a reminder that true theatrical magic never dates.



Adapted by Nick Stafford from Michael Morpurgo's much-loved novel, the story follows Albert, a Devon farm boy, and Joey, the horse he raises from a foal. When the First World War breaks out, Joey is sold to the cavalry and shipped to France, prompting Albert to enlist in the hope of finding his beloved companion. It is a deceptively simple story of friendship, loyalty and survival, yet one that explores the devastating human and animal cost of war with extraordinarily emotional power.

The real stars, however, are the astonishing creations of the Handspring Puppet Company. Three visible puppeteers bring Joey and the magnificent Tophorn to life with such breathtaking skill that, within minutes, you forget you are watching puppets. Every flick of an ear, nervous snort, galloping stride and exhausted collapse feels utterly authentic. It remains one of the greatest achievements in stagecraft, and remarkably, its impact has lost none of its power.

Rae Smith's evocative designs, accompanied by sweeping projections and a haunting folk-inspired score, create scenes that move effortlessly from the rolling hills of rural Devon to the mud, barbed wire and chaos of the Western Front. The battle sequences are both spectacular and terrifying, while quieter moments allow the relationships between people and animals to develop and explain

This is an ensemble piece in which every contribution serves the story rather than competing for attention. The result is a production of remarkable cohesion and emotional honesty. Running for almost three hours, War Horse is an immersive theatrical experience that earns every minute. It is exciting, heartbreaking and visually unforgettable, reminding us that theatre can achieve things that AI will never replace

Whether discovering it for the first time or, like me, returning after many years, this revival confirms War Horse as one of the defining productions of the twenty-first century.



PREVIOUSLY SHOWING

The following recommended productions have now closed but may be touring the country

Evita at The London Palladium



Liberace and Liza at the Harold Pinter Theatre



Standing at the Sky's Edge at the National Theatre



Tina Turner – the Musical at the Aldwych Theatre





Evita at The London Palladium.

Few musicals have stood the test of time quite like *Evita*. Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's masterpiece charts the extraordinary rise of Eva Perón from poverty to becoming Argentina's First Lady and one of the most influential—and controversial—women in modern political history. Packed with unforgettable melodies and powerful storytelling, it remains one of the defining works of British musical theatre.

Jamie Lloyd's 2025 revival at the London Palladium took a bold and contemporary approach. Dispensing with lavish scenery and traditional period costumes, the production relied on minimalist staging, dynamic choreography and striking video projections to place the emphasis firmly on the performances and the political themes. It was a modern interpretation that divided opinion but was undeniably compelling.

Rachel Zegler delivered a sensational West End debut as Eva Perón, combining remarkable vocal power with the charisma needed to portray a woman who captivated an entire nation. Diego Andres Rodriguez brought intensity and energy to the role of Che, while James Olivas provided a commanding presence as Juan Perón. Together, they created a production that felt both intimate and epic.

The show's most talked-about moment came during *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*. Rather than performing the song inside the theatre, Zegler stepped onto the London Palladium's famous balcony overlooking Argyll Street, singing live to hundreds gathered below while audiences inside watched on giant screens. It was an audacious piece of theatrical staging that perfectly captured Eva's relationship with the public and became one of the defining images of the West End season.

Musically, *Evita* remains exceptional. From the driving energy of *Buenos Aires* and *A New Argentina* to the emotional power of *You Must Love Me* and *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*, the score is filled with songs that have become musical theatre classics.

Whether viewed as a political drama, a tragic biography or simply a superb musical, *Evita* continues to demonstrate why it remains one of the greatest shows ever written. This Palladium revival proved that, nearly fifty years after its premiere, Eva Perón's story still has the power to fascinate, provoke and move audiences.



Liberace and Liza at the Harold Pinter Theatre



Liberace and Liza Minnelli never performed together, but that didn't stop David Saffert and Jillian Snow from creating this hilarious and wildly successful mash-up of two of entertainment's most flamboyant icons. Saffert's dazzling piano skills and Snow's powerhouse vocals combine in a musical celebration featuring classics such as *Cabaret*, *New York, New York* and *Over the Rainbow*, alongside unexpected covers of Lady Gaga and Britney Spears.

The show imagines Liberace and Liza as lifelong friends taking to the stage to reminisce about their extraordinary lives, loves and glittering careers. Although the pair never actually met, it is remarkably easy to believe this is exactly the kind of show they might have created together.

David Saffert captures Liberace perfectly, resplendent in a glittering red cape and delivering a playful rendition of *Chopsticks*, complete with his trademark raised hand at the end of every phrase and that mischievous grin that instantly wins over the audience. Jillian Snow makes an equally impressive entrance as Liza Minnelli, embracing every exaggerated gesture, mannerism and vocal flourish with infectious energy and obvious affection for the legendary performer she portrays.

The chemistry between the pair is superb. Their constant battle for the spotlight provides a stream of laugh-out-loud moments, with plenty of cheeky banter, theatrical excess and, naturally, enough sequins to light up the West End.



Liberace & Liza continues at the Harold Pinter Theatre until 4 July before returning to the Edinburgh Fringe in August and then embarking on an extensive tour of the United States. Judging by the number of empty seats this evening, there are still plenty of tickets available. That's a real surprise, because this wonderfully entertaining production deserves far larger audiences. If you're looking for an evening of exceptional musicianship, sharp comedy and glorious nostalgia, don't miss it.



Standing at the Sky's Edge at the National Theatre



Standing at the Sky's Edge is a powerful and deeply moving piece of musical theatre that demonstrates just how compelling theatre can be when it combines outstanding performances with meaningful storytelling. Inspired by the songs of Richard Hawley, the production tells the story of three generations of families living in Sheffield's Park Hill estate, weaving together personal lives with decades of social and political change.

The acting is exceptional throughout. Every member of the cast delivers performances that feel authentic and emotionally charged, creating characters whose hopes, disappointments and resilience resonate long after the curtain falls. The relationships between the characters are beautifully realised, making the audience genuinely invest in their journeys.

Richard Hawley's musical score is one of the show's greatest strengths. His rich, atmospheric songs blend seamlessly into the narrative, ranging from intimate ballads to soaring ensemble numbers. Rather than simply interrupting the action, each song advances the story and deepens the emotional impact, creating moments that are both uplifting and heartbreaking.

What makes Standing at the Sky's Edge particularly memorable is its historical and political backdrop. The production explores changing Britain through the rise and decline of industry, shifting housing policy, economic hardship and evolving communities. These themes never feel heavy-handed; instead, they provide a thoughtful context that enriches the lives of the characters and gives the story remarkable depth.

Visually, the production is equally impressive. The imaginative staging transforms Park Hill from a brutalist housing estate into a living, breathing community, while sensitive lighting and inventive choreography keep the action fluid and engaging. The scene at the end of the first half is visually compelling and a massive eye-opener.

This is not a conventional feel-good musical, but it is an absorbing and rewarding theatrical experience. With outstanding acting, a superb musical score and a moving story rooted in Britain's recent social history, Standing at the Sky's Edge stands as one of the National Theatre's finest productions and is thoroughly deserving of its many accolades.



Tina Turner – the Musical at the Aldwych Theatre



Tina - The Tina Turner Musical is far more than a celebration of one of rock music's greatest performers. It tells the remarkable true story of Anna Mae Bullock's journey from humble beginnings in rural Tennessee to becoming the global superstar known simply as Tina Turner. The production never shies away from the hardships she faces, creating a powerful and inspiring portrait of resilience, determination and extraordinary talent.

The musical balances the darker chapters of Tina's life with electrifying performances of the songs that define her career. Hits including River Deep – Mountain High, Private Dancer, We Don't Need Another Hero, What's Love Got to Do with It, Nutbush City Limits, Simply the Best and the unforgettable Proud Mary are woven naturally into the story, building towards a thrilling concert-style finale.

The title role, beautifully played by Karis Anderson on my visit, is one of the most demanding in musical theatre, requiring exceptional vocal ability, boundless energy and the charisma to portray an icon known across the world. Dynamic choreography, stylish costumes and a first-rate live band recreate the atmosphere of Tina's legendary concerts.

Although the production deals sensitively with domestic abuse and the challenges Tina overcomes, it never loses sight of the triumph of her comeback. Rather than dwelling on tragedy, it celebrates a woman who refuses to be defined by her past and instead reinvents herself as one of the greatest entertainers of all time.

Whether you're a lifelong fan or simply appreciate a compelling true story told through outstanding music, Tina – The Tina Turner Musical delivers an uplifting and emotionally charged evening. It reminds us why Tina Turner earns the title of the Queen of Rock 'n' Roll and leaves audiences cheering long after the final curtain.



The outside cover if you enjoyed this guide.....



This guide is just one of a growing series of documentary travel guides collated under 'The Where To Go' banner. The following titles are presently available or coming really soon.....

