

PETER FROSDICK and MARTIN DODD for UK PRODUCTIONS

Sponsored by



In association with BLACKPOOL GRAND THEATRE proudly present:

Sponsored by



A magical pantomime for all the family!

from CAMELOT
and BBC RADIO LANCASHIRE

from
HOLLYOAKS



STEVE ROYLE
as IDLE JACK



ALF STEWART
from
HOME AND AWAY

RAY MEAGHER
as KING RAT



ANDREW NEWTON-LEE
as DICK

Dick Whittington



from
Blackpool's
RADIO WAVE

JANINE JONES
as FAIRY BOW BELLS



from
Nickelodeon's
YOU'RE NICKED

MICHELLE HUGHES
as ALICE FITZWARREN



MARK TWO
as CAPTAIN



CHARLES BURDEN
as SARAH THE COOK

featuring
LES PUPPETIQUES EN NOIR

Choreographer JOARNE DRY Musical Director DREG FRANCIS

with dancers from
THE BARBARA JACKSON
SCHOOL OF DANCING

BARRY DANIELS
as ALDERMAN FITZWARREN

Director JON EMMANUEL

Produced by MARTIN DODD & PETER FROSDICK

Friday 8th December '06
until Saturday 6th January '07
Box Office: 01253 290190



Tickets: Adults from £10.50,
Children from £8.50, Groups from £8
www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk



Media Pack Contents

Page 3	Cast List
Page 4	Media Release
Page 5	Performance Dates/Times
Page 6	Ray Meagher Biography
Page 7	Andrew Newton-Lee Biography
Page 8	Steve Royle Biography
Page 9	Michelle Hughes Biography
Page 10	Janine Jones Biography
Page 11	Charles Burden Biography
Page 12	Mark Two Biography
Page 13	UK Productions – A Company Profile



Adam Beckett, Press and Marketing
The Grand Theatre Press Office
THE GRAND THEATRE, BLACKPOOL
33 Church Street, Blackpool, Lancashire FY1 1HT
T: 01253 743213 F: 01253 751077
E: press@blackpoolgrand.co.uk



Grand Theatre, Blackpool – Media Pack

CAST LIST

Ray Meagher – King Rat

Andrew Newton-Lee – Dick Whittington

Steve Royle – Idle Jack

Michelle Hughes – Alice Fitzwarren

Janine Jones – Fairy Bow Bells

Charles Burden – Sarah the Cook

Mark Two – Captain

Please Note: Cast photographs are available by email in .jpg format. Please contact Adam Beckett on 01253 743252 or email press@blackpoolgrand.co.uk with your requirements

Dick Whittington

'The ten thousand million delights of a pantomime!'

MEDIA RELEASE

A star line up to make all other pantos pack up and head for London; Dick Whittington at The Grand Theatre, Blackpool

This Christmas join us at The Grand Theatre when we present the feel-good pantomime **DICK WHITTINGTON** starring *Ray Meagher, Andrew Newton-Lee, Steve Royle, Michelle Hughes, Janine Jones, Mark Two and Charles Burden.*

The pantomime runs from Friday 8th December 2006 to Saturday 6th January 2007 and is brought to you by **Martin Dodd** and **Peter Frostdick** for UK Productions, the company who have presented some of the most critically acclaimed touring musicals in recent years, such as *Anything Goes, Carousel, 42nd Street, Seven Brides For Seven Brothers, Jekyll & Hyde* and who have also produced pantomimes at The Grand Theatre for the past eight years.

Thanks to sponsorship from The Gazette, this year's traditional pantomime will be full of music and dance, fun and laughter with fabulous costumes and lavish sets – suitable for all the family this Christmas!

DICK WHITTINGTON will star **Ray Meagher** as King Rat. Ray is best known as Alf Stewart from *Home and Away*; he also starred in the cult smash hit television series *Prisoner Cell Block H*. **Andrew Newton-Lee** from *Hollyoaks* will play the title role of Dick Whittington with Lancashire's favourite family entertainer and BBC Radio Lancashire presenter **Steve Royle** co-star of this summer's *Variety at Night*, returns for his fourth panto in a row, as Idle Jack. The gorgeous **Michelle Hughes** from *Nickelodeon* and girl band *Girl Thing* makes her third panto appearance at the Grand, as Alice Fitzwarren. Making her panto debut is **Janine Jones** from Blackpool's very own radio station Radio Wave 96.5FM as Fairy Bow Bells. The line-up is completed with **Mark Two** making his Grand Theatre debut as the Ship's Captain and **Charles Burden** one of the country's most versatile performers with over 25 years of pantomime dame under his belt as Sarah the Cook.

Tickets for **DICK WHITTINGTON** are priced from just £10.50 with various concessions and Friends of The Grand discounts available. Call the **Box Office** now on **01253 290 190**. For party bookings of 20 persons or more, contact the **Groups Hotline** on **01253 743 232**.

.../ends

Notes to Editors:

Please note Dick Whittington has been generously sponsored by Blackpool newspaper The Gazette. Ray Meagher's surname is pronounced "Marr". Interviews are currently being organised with all cast members.



Performance Calendar

Date	Time	Price Band	Time	Price Band
Fri 8th Dec	2pm	* preview	7pm	C
Sat 9th Dec	2pm	C	7pm	C
Sun 10th Dec	2pm	C	5:30pm	C
Mon 11th Dec		NO PANTO PERFORMANCE		
Tues 12th Dec	10am	C	7pm	C
Weds 13th Dec	10am	C	7pm	C
Thurs 14th Dec	10am	C	7pm	C
Fri 15th Dec	10am	C	7pm	C
Sat 16th Dec	2pm	C	7pm	C
Sun 17th Dec	2pm	C	5:30pm	C
Mon 18th Dec		Concert: Mistletoe & Rhyme		
Tues 19th Dec	10am	C	7pm	B
Weds 20th Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Thurs 21st Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Fri 22nd Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Sat 23rd Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Sun 24th Dec	10am	B	2pm	B
Mon 25th Dec		CHRISTMAS DAY		
Tues 26th Dec	2pm	A	7pm	A
Weds 27th Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Thurs 28th Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Fri 29th Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Sat 30th Dec	2pm	B	7pm	B
Sun 31st Dec		Concert: Andy Prior and his Big Band		
Mon 1st Jan	2pm	B	7pm	B
Tues 2nd Jan	2pm	B	7pm	B
Weds 3rd Jan	2pm	B	7pm	B
Thurs 4th Jan	10am	C	7pm	B
Fri 5th Jan	10am	C	7pm	B
Sat 6th Jan	2pm	B	7pm	B

Discounts are available for groups of 20+, contact the Groups Hotline on 01253 743 232

Price Band	A	B	C
Dress Circle	£16.50	£16.50 (£14.50)	£10.50
Stalls	£16.50	£16.50 (£14.50)	£10.50
Upper Circle	£16.50	£16.50 (£14.50)	£10.50
Side Upper Circle	£11.00	£11.00	£10.50
Gallery	£11.00	£11.00	£10.50



RAY MEAGHER

Ray is well known to millions of British viewers as Alf Stewart from *Home and Away*. The show has now been in production for 17 years and there are only two of the original cast left... Ray is one of them!

He was born in outback Queensland on a sheep and cattle property. He is an experienced horseman, bushman and stockman.

Ray is also known to British audiences from television series such as *A Country Practice* and *Prisoner Cell Block H*. His mini series include *The Great Bookie Robbery*, *A Fortunate Life*, *The Shiralie* and *Spit McPhee* with Sir John Mills. Ray has also appeared in many feature films such as *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* and *Breaker Morant*, which starred one of his favourite British actors Edward Woodward.

In 1987 Ray won the prestigious Penguin Award for Best Lead Actor in a one-off drama for his performance in the ABC tele-movie *Male Order Bride*, an award which was judged by his peers.

Outside of acting Ray's great love is rugby and at the height of his football career he played against France. When he retired from first class rugby, Ray commentated *Match of the Day* each weekend for the Channel 9TV Network. He still plays touch rugby each weekend, but admits that while he can still see holes in the defence, these days he has trouble running through them!

This is Ray's thirteenth pantomime in the UK. He has played the roles of Captain Hook in *Peter Pan*, Abanazer in *Aladdin*, The King in *Jack and the Beanstalk*, The Baron in *Cinderella*, Ringmaster in *Goldilocks* and King Rat in *Dick Whittington* to name but a few.

Ray loves coming to the UK each Christmas and is delighted to be in Blackpool at the Grand Theatre this year.

(Ray's surname is pronounced "Marr".)



ANDREW NEWTON-LEE

For one still quite young, Andrew has already had a wide and varied career. He had been studying law at Hull University for two years before getting his first break in TV appearing in *Where The Heart Is*. From there on in, Andrew has not looked back and has starred in numerous television shows such as *Heartbeat* and *Doctors* and in *Coronation Street* (as pizza boy Liam Strong). During 2004 Andrew was seen regularly on our screens with a starring role in teen soap *Hollyoaks* as aspiring Casanova Robbie Flynn, the goodtime party boy with an eye for the ladies. Andrew originally performed under his birth name "Andrew Newton", but after a few weeks on *Hollyoaks* had to change his stage name to avoid confusion with the controversial stage hypnotist of the same name.

Andrew has played numerous roles on the stage, performing at theatres across the country, playing Prince Charming at Northampton Theatre, Danny Zuko in *Grease* and Wild Bill Hickock, in *Calamity Jane* at the Northern Theatre, and has played Harry in *Zigger Zagger* at the Hull Theatre.

STEVE ROYLE

Steve returns to pantomime at The Grand Theatre, Blackpool for his fourth consecutive year. His popularity with both children and adults alike made him an obvious choice for this year's cast and he is delighted to spend his Christmas with us again this season.

Steve is probably best known as Mad Edgar from Camelot Theme Park. He initially created his now infamous medieval character when he began work at the park just over 12 years ago. Since then his notoriety has grown with performances in theatres, television, cruise ships, hotels, holiday centres and social clubs around the world.

Steve currently presents his own show on BBC Radio Lancashire each week.



In 1996 Steve won the *Search for a Star* competition at the Talk of the Coast and was voted Critics' Choice at the *Showcall Showcase* in 1997. He has appeared at the Variety Club of Great Britain annual dinner, performed the warm-up on Phil Cool's television shows, entertained the casts of *Coronation Street* and *Brookside*, supported Joe Pasquale at the Leeds Varieties and performed with Rory Bremner, Rik Mayall, Ken Dodd, Dave Spikey and Peter Kay.

In October 1997 he appeared in his first serious acting role in ITV's *The Things You Do For Love*, where ironically he met his future wife Janet Maher. Steve and Janet were married in September 2000 and in 2002 their daughter Daisy was born.

In 1999 Steve appeared on ITV's *Give Your Mate A Break* with Les Dennis and has since become a regular headline act on the alternative comedy circuit. He has supported Peter Kay and Dave Spikey on tour as well as working with other top alternative comedians such as Johnny Vegas, Paul Zenon, Tony Burgess and Alex Boardman.

Steve is also co-founder of the Slaughterhouse-Live ("Laughter" with an "S") character comedy nights. The group regularly perform at The Comedy Store" and they were nominated in the "best touring show" category at the Manchester Comedy Awards, losing out to Peter Kay!

Last year saw Steve perform on the famous Blackpool North Pier throughout the summer, recording *Max and Paddy's Road To Nowhere* with Peter Kay and starring in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* at The Grand Theatre, Blackpool. Steve is co-star of the Grand Theatre's Variety at Night, Blackpool's top family summer show in 2006.

MICHELLE HUGHES

Local girl Michelle Hughes, originally from Carlton, now resident in Thornton-Cleveleys, is delighted to be returning for her third consecutive year to The Grand Theatre Blackpool.

Michelle has a wide variety of experience in the world of show business which includes hit records, international television shows, world concert tours and she has interviewed many of the world's most popular superstars.

Michelle trained at the acclaimed Phil Winston's Theatreworks and then went on to her first stage performance as one of Jonathon Wilkes Space Girls at The Pleasure Beach, Blackpool. In 1998 Michelle then went on to be part of the top ten selling girl band Girl Thing which under the direction of Safe Management and the now renowned Simon Cowell, achieved worldwide success. During this time, Michelle performed in such countries as Australia, The USA, Germany, Sweden, Japan and Taiwan.

Television appearances include *Top of the Pops*, *MTV*, *SM:TV*, *Popworld*, *This Morning*, *London Tonight*, *The Priory*, *The Big Breakfast*, *The Disney Channel*, *Blue Peter*, *CBBC*, *DiggIt*, *FBI*, *Newsround*, *CITV* and *Nickelodeon*.

It was during her time with Girl Thing that Michelle guest presented for the television channel Nickelodeon and, as a result, was made a full-time presenter for the channel. During this time, Michelle interviewed such well-known names as Sir Christopher Lee, Orlando Bloom, Elijah Wood and the cast from the blockbuster trilogy, *Lord of the Rings*; Tobey Maguire and Kirsten Dunst from *Spiderman*; Rupert Grint from *Harry Potter* and from the music world, such stars as Westlife, Blue, Lemar, Emma Bunton and the Sugababes.

Michelle's most recent project is her own successful dance school, The Dance Academy, in Lytham St. Annes, where her philosophy is to pass on her wealth of experience to the up and coming talent of the future, as well as allowing her time to learn her new role as a mum!





JANINE JONES

Janine started in radio in 1999. Listening to Commercial Radio Stations in Manchester inspired her pursue a career in radio. She dropped Galaxy an e-mail and the rest is history!

Janine's first job in radio was for AA Roadwatch reporting the traffic and travel on local radio stations then moving on to a bigger company, Trafficlink. Janine was the Senior Broadcaster and worked on BBC stations in the North West and other local stations including Radio Wave. BBC Manchester then approached her to do the early weekend breakfast show which led to co-presenting with Phil Wood every Saturday morning throughout

the summer of 2004.

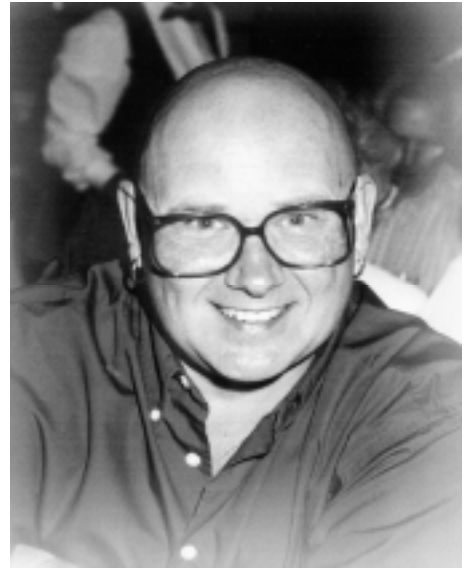
In September of 2004 Janine presented the evening show on Chester's Dee 106.3. This also opened up opportunities to present on Juice FM in Liverpool and Key 103 in Manchester.

Janine now co-presents the breakfast show on Blackpool's Radio Wave 96.5fm with Roy Lynch each weekday morning and her own solo show every Sunday afternoon.

CHARLES BURDEN

Charles is a very experienced and versatile performer in cabaret and theatre. For 35 years he was part of the double act Burden & Moran, until the death of his stage partner.

He has appeared as an Ugly Sister for 25 years, as well as appearing as Dame in other pantomime productions. In summer shows he appeared, with his late partner presenting an illusion act, performing stage magic and escapology. Charles has a vast experience of directing, with 22 summer shows, 9 pantomimes, 7 musicals and 5 plays to his credit! Add to this set and lighting designs for 23 plays and musicals and you'll see why Charles is respected in every area of theatre.



His theatre roles have included Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*, Mr Bumble in *Oliver*, the Kralahome in *The King & I*, Parchester in *Me & My Girl*, R F Simpson in *Singin' In The Rain* and Stanley in *A Bedful of Foreigners*.

Pantomime has seen Charles in many guises, appearing as Sarah the Cook in *Dick Whittington*, Nanny in *Snow White*, Nurse in *Babes in the Wood*, The Wicked Queen in *Snow White*, Widow Twankey in *Aladdin* and the title role of *Mother Goose*.

Charles has worked alongside many star names including Ted Rogers, Arthur Askey, Mike and Bernie Winters, Morecambe & Wise, Jim Davidson, The Krankies and Wayne Sleep, to name but a few.

His television appearances include *Vanity Fair*, *The Love Girl*, *The innocent* and *Lovejoy*. Channel 4 aired an hour-long documentary on Charles and his late partner's career on *Mavis On 4*.

Charles is celebrating 40 years of appearing in pantomime this year; his first panto was *Dick Whittington*! He has also designed and created a whole new wardrobe for this production ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous and looks forward to showing them off to Blackpool audiences.

MARK TWO

Mark is really excited to be appearing as the Ship's Captain in *Dick Whittington* this Christmas. Although no stranger to Blackpool, having appeared at the North Pier, the ABC and Blackpool Tower, Mark will fulfil a life long ambition this year, to tread the boards at the Grand Theatre.

Born into a theatrical family, Mark has been actively involved in professional entertainment from the age of 7, making his television debut at the tender age of 11. During his busy and varied career, Mark's continued association with television, theatre and cabaret has included appearances at The London Palladium, The Victoria Palace and most major theatres and holiday centres throughout the UK, with some of the most prestigious names in show business. He has also featured in television specials including *The Performers*, *What a Performance*, *Pushy Parents* and many more.

In the late 1980s, Mark was well known throughout the UK and Europe for his hit single *Holiday Rockin'* but pantomime is one of his greatest passions with over 30 professional pantos to his credit. Mark is a well established performer with one of the most reputable theatrical companies in the country, playing various roles such as Buttons, Idle Jack, Billy Goose, Chinese Policeman, Brokers Man and most recently Ugly Sister. His other theatrical roles include the Cowardly Lion in *The Wizard of Oz*, Daddy Warbucks in *Annie* and Billy Flynn in *Chicago*.

Mark spends a great deal of his time running his family production company, Mark Two Character Productions, writing, producing and directing lavish musicals, production shows and spectacular Ultra Violet fantasies for the holiday and leisure industry.

Mark has just returned from a successful season in Cyprus where he and his daughter Marie have been presenting their new show *Two's a Crowd*.

Mark promises a few surprises and lavish costumes created by his wife Dee – but watch out for his crazy car!

UK PRODUCTIONS A COMPANY PROFILE

Formed in 1995 by directors Martin Dodd and Peter Frosdick, UK Productions Ltd have established themselves as one of Britain's foremost producers of musicals, pantomime and dance shows. The company has become renowned for its high production values in all genres. As they continue to develop, autumn of 2002 saw the first UK Productions play complete a very successful and critically acclaimed national tour.



The company has so far produced nine major musicals: *Barnum*, *42nd Street*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Carousel*, *Anything Goes*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Beauty and the Beast*, starring such artists as Paul Nicholas, Gemma Craven, Dave Willetts, Darren Day, Sam Kane, Andrew O'Connor, Jonathon Morris, Ruth Madoc and James Smillie.

UK Productions have a passion for pantomime, and produce shows for a number of theatres nation wide. They apply the same high standards to these productions as they do to their touring musicals. Whether large or small they all receive the UK Productions treatment of all-star casts in traditional shows backed by lavish sets and costumes.

Working closely with Wayne Sleep OBE UK Productions have produced three original dance shows, *World of Classical Ballet*, *Aspects of Dance* and *Ready Steady Dance*, celebrating many different styles of dance and introducing new performers and choreographers alongside seasoned and respected guest artists. These shows have all completed nation wide tours.

UK Productions have produced a number of outdoor events and are responsible for the creation and production of *The Stansted Proms*, an annual two-day, open-air concert playing to up to 10,000 people a night in the grounds of Stansted House, a stately home in the heart of Hampshire. The concerts feature live orchestras and bands and each evening culminates in our now legendary fantastic fireworks finale.

Press quotes for their shows such as "*The most successful production of this musical I have ever seen*" Edinburgh Evening News, "*Spectacle is the name of the game in this show*" Sunday Express, "*I doubt very much whether this current touring production could be bettered.*" Birmingham Post and "*Great dancing, fabulous costumes-altogether an irresistible package*" The Scotsman, sum up the quality which the company apply to all of their work.

For further information please visit www.ukproductions.co.uk.