

WRITERS EXCLUSIVE

# Ghost Riders

Andy Nyman and Jeremy Dyson tell all about **Ghost Stories'** new UK tour and their latest play, *The Psychic*

WORDS: STEVE O'BRIEN

IT'S 15 YEARS SINCE ANDY NYMAN AND Jeremy Dyson first premiered their play *Ghost Stories* to rave reviews and gangbusters box office. But despite the show's acclaim and popularity – even inspiring a film version in 2017 – it never enjoyed a UK-wide tour. Until now, that is.

*Ghost Stories* took to the road on 17 January, and will eventually finish its run at Cardiff's Millennium Centre on 2 August. A decade and a half on from that first production, its writers are clearly stoked that their play has been dusted down once more, and are keen to let us know that, even if you've seen it before, it won't be quite the same experience this time round...

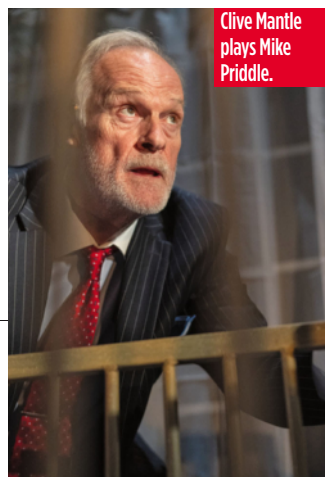
"It's the original production, but Jeremy and I and the creatives constantly strive to find new moments," Nyman tells Red Alert. "There are new things in the sound mix that are amazing and there are new features in the design that make it richer and fuller. So it feels very fresh and exciting, and the cast is superb."

If you've never seen the play or the movie, *Ghost Stories* is a portmanteau tale anchored by the character of

Professor Philip Goodman (played here by Dan Tetsell), a paranormal sceptic who's tasked with investigating three tales that his hero, fellow debunker Charles Cameron, cannot find a rational explanation for. It was inspired by Nyman walking past a poster for *The Woman In Black* in the 2000s and thinking "How insane that was the only scary play in town".

Nyman and his co-writer Jeremy Dyson (best known as a member of The League of Gentlemen) have been friends since they were 15, bonding over a love of horror. With both also keen theatre-goers, what they've loved most about the reaction to *Ghost Stories* is that it's affected people new to the theatrical experience.

"It's so rewarding," Nyman enthuses. "On the first night, in front of us was this group of what I would imagine is a community group with these really tough kids, kids that may never have been to the theatre before. We just thought, 'They're going to be on their phones the whole time, they're going to be taking the piss,' and within two minutes, they were hiding, they were screaming! I mean, this fucking thing packs a punch."



Clive Mantle plays Mike Priddle.



Style icons Jeremy Dyson and Andy Nyman.



David Cardy as watchman Tony Matthews.



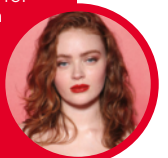
Professor Goodman (Dan Tetsell) is sceptical.

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## NEWS WARP HIGH-SPEED INFORMATION

- You remind us of the babe... Robert Eggers to write and direct a sequel to 1986's **Labyrinth**.
- Eggers is also turning lycanthropic in medieval horror **Werwolf**, set for Christmas 2026 release.
- Ryan Gosling rumoured to be joining Shawn Levy's **Star Wars** movie.
- Jake Gyllenhaal to star in an untitled supernatural thriller from M Night Shyamalan.
- Elliot Page, Himesh Patel and Jon Bernthal boarding Christopher Nolan's **The Odyssey**.
- Dan Stevens to return as Trapper in the next **Godzilla x Kong** slamdown.
- Harris Dickinson reportedly in the frame for Cyclops in an **X-Men** reboot, with Sadie Sink a pick for Jean Grey.
- **The Bourne Ultimatum's** George Nolfi is the latest screenwriter to take a crack at **Star Wars: New Jedi Order**.
- Matthew Lillard and Scott Foley returning for **Scream 7**.
- **Barbarian's** Zach Cregger to write and direct the **Resident Evil** reboot.
- Drew Hancock writing **The Faculty** remake.



DANIELE VENTURELLI/GETTY FOR ARMANI BEAUTY

Also sure to pack a punch is the pair's new play, *The Psychic*. Set to premiere next year, it tells the story of a TV clairvoyant who, despite being branded a charlatan after she loses a court case, is contacted by a wealthy couple desperate to make contact with their late daughter. What follows, according to the official synopsis, "makes her question everything she's ever believed."

"We actually had the first half mapped out 10 years ago," reveals Dyson on the play's long gestation period, explaining how the *Ghost Stories* movie, as well as various other projects, got in the way, "and the second half was done in lockdown."

"It's a world that we absolutely adore, the world of showmen," explains Nyman – who, away from his work with Dyson, is a regular collaborator of illusionist Derren Brown.

"But also our inspirations were *Sleuth* and *Deathtrap*, those stage thrillers where you never quite know what's happening. With *The Psychic* there are rug pulls that just keep on giving! Plus, of course, there are some delicious scares.

"And with the leads, it's three fantastic female roles. Having come out of *Ghost Stories* that was entirely male, both in what it's about and how it's presented, it's been really exciting writing these great parts for women."

## “ There are rug pulls that just keep on giving! Plus, of course, some delicious scares ”

At the time of talking, the pair are about to have their first meeting with the show's designer and its magic consultant, but *The Psychic* and the *Ghost Stories* tour aren't the only things on their to do list. Also taking up their time is the small-screen adaptation of their 2023 novel *The Warlock Effect*, a '50s-set thriller about a stage magician who gets recruited as a spy by the British Secret Service.

"Even before publication it got into a bidding war," explains Dyson, "and so we were in a very fortunate position of choosing who to develop it. We've written the first two scripts, and we're doing that with Hartwood Films and the BBC, so it's the *Sherlock* team of Steven Moffat and Sue Vertue."

"It's got all the things that a Dyson/Nyman thing has," adds Andy, "which is for an audience, you think, 'Oh, great, it's that kind of thing;' but then it slips through your fingers, and you think, 'Oh no, it's *that!*' The response to the book has been really touching, people seem to really love it."

So, stage plays, movies, TV, novels... Is there anything left on Andy and Jeremy's creative bucket list? "We just want to do purely work that we love with a passion," smiles Dyson, "and if that happens to take us to film or to the stage or to television, then great, we love them all." ●

*Ghost Stories* is currently on tour. For more information, visit [ghoststoriesplay.com](http://ghoststoriesplay.com).



► **SCI-FACT!** As an actor, Andy Nyman appeared in ITV's 1989 adaptation of Susan Hill's *The Woman In Black*.