

The Diary

THEATRE MUSIC COMEDY EVENTS EXHIBITIONS FILM FURTHER AFIELD...

Back in the habit

SISTER ACT COMES TO LEEDS GRAND THEATRE THIS MONTH – WE SPEAK TO TWO OF ITS STARS, LESLIE JOSEPH AND SANDRA MARVIN.

Lesley Joseph, Sandra Marvin, Keala Settle and Company
Photos by Manuel Harlan



Brace yourselves sisters – the habit is returning to Leeds! Direct from London, this eagerly anticipated brand-new production of *Sister Act* comes to Leeds Grand Theatre from Tuesday 21 March to Saturday 1 April.

Based on the iconic movie, this sparkling tribute to the universal power of friendship, sisterhood and music tells the hilarious story of the disco diva whose life takes a surprising turn when she witnesses a murder. Under protective custody she is hidden in the one place she won't be found – a convent! Disguised as a nun and under the suspicious watch of Mother Superior, Deloris helps her fellow sisters find their voices as she unexpectedly rediscovers her own.

The stunning cast includes TV and West End legend Lesley Joseph, Olivier Award-winner and star of *Tracy Beaker* Clive Rowe, West End sensation and *Hairspray* favourite Lizzie Bea and *Emmerdale* and *Waitress* star Sandra Marvin as Deloris Van Cartier, everyone's favourite nun on the run!

Here we speak to Leslie and Sandra to find out more.

Sister Act is a much-loved movie as well as a musical. Were you aware of the show before you joined?

Sandra Marvin (SM): I have vivid memories of the film as it was a family favourite! We'd sit and watch all together and we'd always laugh at Whoopie's antics with the nuns. I'd recite all of her dialogue, singing out with all the nuns and try and learn their routines. It was definitely an interactive experience watching *Sister Act* with me as a kid!
Leslie Joseph (LJ): I saw Craig Revel Horwood's *Sister Act* revival with Alexandra Burke, so I was very aware of the show before I joined. I think people love the production because of the great music, and it's very much an audience show. You leave feeling so uplifted.

Sister Act The Musical features a fabulous score by the multi award-winning Alan Menken (Beauty and the Beast, The Little Mermaid). How would



you describe the soundtrack, and do you have a favourite number to perform and/or watch?

SM: *Sister Act* is set in the late seventies in an era where disco was dominating the dancefloors and Studio 54 was definitely the place to be seen. Alan Menken clearly pays homage to all of the fabulous disco divas of that era. His songs are reminiscent of Donna Summer, Cheryl Lynn, The Stylistics, Bee Gees and so many more of our disco favourites. You can't help but dance to this music and every night we've seen audiences up on their feet dancing in the aisles! My personal favourite to perform is probably 'Fabulous Baby' but to watch, definitely 'Lady in the Long Black Dress!' It's a smooth Barry White Meets Stylistics number.

LJ: I think the soundtrack is amazing. I must say, the audience responses so far have made me feel like we're doing a pop concert. My favourite song is one that Mother Superior has called 'Here Within These Walls' where she describes what life is like in the convent, and how the outside world is full of sin, but inside you find God and you find yourself. It's a beautiful number, but probably the most serious number in the show to an extent.

What do you hope audiences take away from this new production?

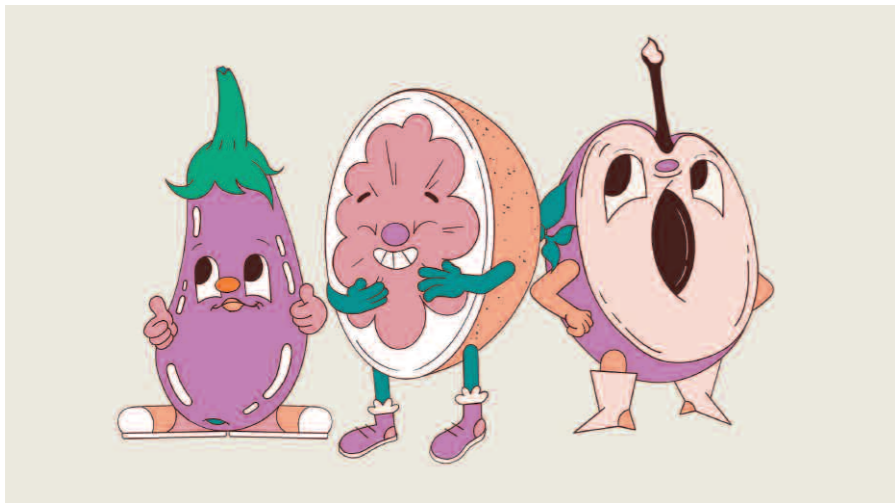
SM: *Sister Act* is about finding your community and finding and realising your dreams. It just has so much heart and joy. Audiences will be moved by the journeys of the characters one moment but crying with laughter the next. It is simply joyous!

LJ: I think audiences will take away a reinvigorated love for live theatre. It's a production that also says something about community, and that's one thing that the lockdown showed us was important – caring about your neighbours, caring about your friends, and helping those in need. It's an absolutely joyous musical! To see the audiences at the end, where they stand waving their arms and singing along, they rediscover the joy of theatre.

Is there a piece of advice you've received or that you would pass on to anyone hoping to go into the creative industry?

LJ: I don't know if you remember a man called Quentin Crisp, he was very flamboyant and wonderful, and way before his time. He was avantgarde and he was an amazing character. He always used to call me 'Miss Joseph'. His piece of advice was, 'Miss Joseph, believe in fate, but lean forward where fate can see you'. I think that's one of the best pieces of advice I could give to anybody.

Words: Isabelle Holden



Exhibitions

Private Parts

Until 11 May
Thackray Museum of Medicine, Leeds
thackraymuseum.co.uk/privateparts
Private Parts tackles the taboo and stigma surrounding private parts and identity through a series of thought-provoking art pieces and interactive exhibits.

The exhibition aims to create a safe space for visitors to learn, discuss, and explore the nuances of these often-shrouded topics, with the goal of fostering a deeper understanding and acceptance of the diversity of human bodies and experiences.

Private Parts will feature stories by a diverse group of storytellers, actors, medical experts and artists in a series of installations that aims to create a comfortable space to talk about uncomfortable things.

“We believe that it is essential to

break the silence around private parts and identity and create a space for open and honest dialogue,” said Edward Appleyard, CEO Thackray Museum of Medicine, “We hope that this exhibition will empower visitors to take control of their own bodies and identities, and to feel comfortable talking to medical professionals about their health.”

Twilight Tour: Albert Houthuesen: Moon, Muse and Poet Clown

2 March
Danum Gallery, Library and Museum
www.dglam.org.uk

This exhibition follows the life of Albert Houthuesen, a Dutch artist who lived in Doncaster during World War Two. Join the exhibition curator, Neil McGregor, as he gives a tour of the artworks in the exhibition. The tours are free of charge.

Events

James Haskell: Sex, Tries and Videotape

8 March / Nottingham Glee Club
6 April / Leeds City Varieties
myticket.co.uk/artists/james-haskell
James Haskell, the number one podcaster with The Good, the Bad and the Rugby, author of Sunday Times bestselling book “What A Flanker”, smash-hit follow up “Ruck Me” and host of Amuse Douche, is back on the road once again with his new stage show – “Sex, Tries and Videotape”.

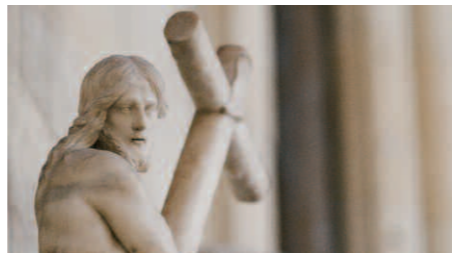
This show charts James’ journey from his early days as mischievous schoolboy,

through his time as a professional rugby player, having played around the world including at Wasps, Northampton, Stade Francais, The Ricoh Black Rams, and The Highlanders. There is no other player out there with more stories to tell than James.

Tim Peake: My Journey Into Space

22 March / Doncaster Dome
www.dclt.co.uk/the-dome

Fasten your seatbelts and join Tim Peake on his epic journey to the International Space Station this March. Extending his sell-out UK tour, Tim will be giving a fascinating insight into the life of an astronaut and revealing secrets of life in space.



Classical

Handel’s Messiah

25 March
York Minster
www.yorkminster.org

Experience Handel’s popular oratorio performed by the Choir of York Minster and internationally renowned soloists in the spectacular setting of the cathedral’s Nave.

It will be the first time the choir has performed the popular oratorio since December 2019, and the first time in recent years that they have staged the moving and poignant choral performance, which tells the story of Christ, during the season of Lent and Easter.

The choir will be joined by an orchestra and world renowned soloists Keri Fuge (Soprano), Ed Lyon (Tenor), Victoria Simmonds (Mezzo-Soprano) and Morgan Pearse (Baritone) for the concert.

Tickets on sale now at www.yorkminster.org or by calling 01904 557200.

Music

George Ezra

16 March
First Direct Arena
www.firstdirectarena.com

Hertfordshire-born singer-songwriter George Ezra is taking to the stage on his latest tour. Sing your heart out to his catchy tracks, including his hit single ‘Budapest’.

Limehouse Lizzy

23 March
The Leopard, Doncaster
leopard-doncaster.co.uk

Returning to the stage this March, the Thin Lizzy cover band are ready to entertain. Get ready for an action-packed night brimming full of explosive entertainment and infectious energy - they have wowed audiences worldwide performing the greatest hits of Thin Lizzy.

Comedy

The Absolutely Dragulous Show

4 March
Doncaster Little Theatre
doncasterlittletheatre.co.uk

Taking centre stage this March, the UK’s Funniest Drag Duo- ‘Absolutely Dragulous’ are back with a truly electric show.

Get ready for spectacular vocals, dazzling outfits and a wealth of laughs - it’s sure to be absolutely fabulous!

Simon Brodtkin: Screwed Up

8 March & 7 October
City Varieties Music Hall
leedsheritagetheatres.com

Following his sell-out shows at the Edinburgh Fringe, as well as being the most-watched British Tik Tok comedian ever- Simon Brodtkin is back. His new stand-up show is sure to be hilarious.

Theatre

Grease!

8-11 March 8-11
CAST Doncaster
castindoncaster.com

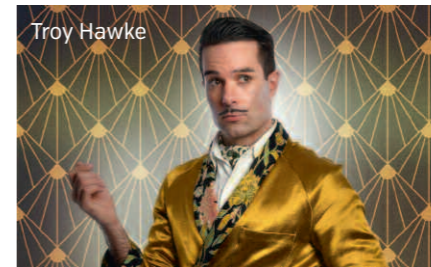
This electric musical has remained one of the world’s greatest for decades. Feel uplifted with a night of quality entertainment- watching the love story of Danny and Sandy unfold. Featuring the hit songs ‘Greased Lightnin’, ‘Hopelessly Devoted to You,’ and ‘You’re The One That I Want’- it’s not one to miss.

Northern Ballet’s The Great Gatsby

8-18 March
Leeds Grand Theatre
leedsheritagetheatres.com

The 1920s roar back to life in Northern Ballet’s Jazz Age smash.

Jay Gatsby’s Long Island mansion buzzes day and night with the young, the rich and the beautiful. But as the champagne flows at his glitzy parties, glamour and romance give way to jealousy and tragedy. Because here in Prohibition-era New York, everybody



Troy Hawke: Sigmund Troy’d!

11 March / City Varieties Music Hall
leedsheritagetheatres.com

Following his rise to fame with the viral ‘Greeters Guild’ online series, and a sell-out stunt at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2022, prepare to be entertained with an evening of infectious comedy and feel-good humour.

Jimecoin: The Craic!

9 March / City Varieties Music Hall
leedsheritagetheatres.com

Sit back and enjoy a night of stand-up comedy from the Irish comedy genius. He’ll have the audience in stitches. Book now to avoid disappointment.



has something to hide...

Northern Ballet’s acclaimed production of F Scott Fitzgerald’s great American novel is back for 2023, lifted from page to stage by David Nixon CBE’s glorious choreography and Sir Richard Rodney Bennett CBE’s dazzling score. It’s the party to end all parties –and you won’t want to miss it.

Beneath the Banner

14 March
CAST Doncaster
castindoncaster.com

Brought to the stage by ‘Up The Road Theatre’, this production shines a light on the untold stories of the coal mining community- in their own words. Coal mining pits were at the heart of many communities a century ago - this production is bringing the memories back to life.



Food & Drink

Wetherby Beer Festival

28-29 April / Wetherby Grange Park
www.wetherbybeerfest.co.uk

Wetherby Grange Park is planning the town’s largest ever beer festival aiming to attract thousands from across the region as part of a huge fundraising push next year.

The Wetherby Beer Festival will be jointly run by the combined volunteer forces of the rugby, cricket, bowls and football clubs. As well more than 35 artisan, local and regional beers, ciders and stouts to sample, organisers are determined to make this a real family affair, with live music, a gin bar, champagne lounge, children’s entertainment and street food concessions all part of the two-day festival.

An over-18s only business networking event will take place on the Friday evening with Saturday’s ticketed event open to all ages with up to three children, 12 and under, allowed in for free with every paying adult. Doors open 5-11pm on the Friday and 12noon until 11pm on the Saturday.

Deborah Kelly, Chair of Wetherby Beer Festival, said: “All the profits from the Wetherby Beer Festival will be invested in Grange Park, helping us to keep local grassroots sports thriving.”

Any local bands or singers who would like to be considered as part of the live music line up should also get in touch via the Beer Festival’s website or Facebook Page (@WetherbyBeerFestival). The same invitation applies to any independent, local, food providers who would like to have a concession at Grange Park as part of the festival.

Tickets can be purchased in advance at www.wetherbybeerfest.co.uk for £7 per person or £8 on the day and there is a wide array of sponsorship packages also available.