

The Guide

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Harry casts his final spell

But is the latest - and last - Potter movie really cinema magic? >> 23

Rocking into the sunset

Why hit band are calling it a day >> 20



Giving the States a spin
DJs in American recording deal >> 21



THE GOOD OLD DAYS?

Chumbawamba star takes band's new show back to the days of music hall

BOFF Whalley has spent his career standing up for the little man. As a founder member of Chumbawamba, the politically-inspired pop band whose hit Tubthumping was a hit on both sides of the Atlantic, he's found inspiration fighting injustice, oppression and standing up for the rights of the working class.

Now, the Burnley-born guitarist has branched out with a new musical celebrating the good old days of the music hall.

Big Society will get its world premiere at the famous City Varieties in Leeds in the new year with comedian Phill Jupitus taking the lead role.

"The show's set in a music hall in 1912 and the colourful cast of characters find their livelihoods are under threat from the Ministry of Taste," said Boff. "It's meant to be fun but with a serious

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BOFF WHALLEY

message behind it..

"I got the original idea from seeing a picture of David Cameron and Boris Johnston when they were at Eton together. They were both dressed up like little Edwardian gents and it just struck me that picture could easily have been taken 100 years ago.

"Then when you think about it, not that much has changed over the years. We might think we're all more sophisticated but really nothing much has changed."

Boff (he got the nickname in the early days of Chumbawamba for being a bit of a boffin) deliberately chose a music hall as the setting for his new work, which

Chumbawamba musician Boff Whalley is to celebrate one of the north's forgotten working class traditions in a brand new musical which, as he tells JOHN ANSON, was inspired by Prime Minister David Cameron

will be performed with Red Ladder Theatre Company.

"When you think of music hall people have an image of The Good Old Days on the TV with everyone in their finery," said Boff. "But really the music hall was very much a working class entertainment, somewhere the mill workers and the miners would go after work. It was a fairly raucous affair."

Big Society is described as a romp featuring 12 new songs, written by Boff, which will be performed by Chumbawamba.

"We're just getting together now to start looking at the songs together," he said. "We hope to record them as an album in time for the show. As musicians we have to be much more disciplined working with actors. As for the show itself, we're allowing the cast to entertain. I'm sure it will change a lot from what I have written once we get into rehearsals, which is good. That was the point of music hall. We also want the audience to interact with the performers. In the original music halls, the audiences had to be won over. If you weren't up to it as a performer you got booed off."

"The fact the show will be staged at the world-famous City Varieties will add an extra dimension to it as it's still an authentic music hall setting."

Big Society is at Leeds City Varieties from Friday, January 18 to Saturday, February 4. Details from box office on 0113 243 0808.



SHOWTIME
Chumbawamba with Phill Jupitus. Below, Boff Whalley



Yet another town is getting the blues

BLACKBURN is to get its first one-day blues festival later this year.

The event, on Sunday, October 9, will feature five live bands performing at the Windsor Suite at King George's Hall.

Tickets for this exciting new event, which will feature some of the brightest new names on the British blues scene

plus a major — as yet to be announced — headline act, will go on sale this morning at a special 'early bird' price of £16.

These tickets are strictly limited and, once sold, advance tickets will then be available at £19.

The first act announced for the festival is the Clare Free Band (pictured), whose debut album Be

Who You Are was a rousing collection of blues, rock and country and received great critical acclaim.

The man behind the festival, promoter Steve Stanley, said he hoped it would become an annual event and put Blackburn firmly on the blues map.

"Having put on events at



JULY EVENTS

25-29	BackStage Pass Performing Arts Summer School <i>Inc. all training, lunches, snacks and drinks!</i>	£145 Full Week
30 SAT	Andy Oliver plus guests Acoustic night featuring three North West acts	7.30pm £6adv

AUGUST EVENTS

2 TUE	Ladies film night : GHOST Includes meal	7pm £12.50adv
6 SAT	The Hamsters Farewell tour from the blues-rock boys after 24 yrs	7pm £12.50adv
11 THU	Hermans Hemits DVD Show	7pm FREE
12 FRI	The Wedding Present UK indie legends	7pm £17.50adv
13 SAT	Clitheroe food festival Cookery demonstrations from leading chefs	10am-4pm £5adv
13 SAT	Acoustic Village VII Featuring Sara Lowes plus guests	7.30pm £6adv
20 SAT	Houghton Weavers Locally loved folk performers	7pm £12/£10adv
28 SUN	Heaven in the afternoon Return of the monthly soul music event	3pm £6adv

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