

# TONY!

## THE BLAIR MUSICALS



**Pleasance Dome, 5.30PM. Jul. 30<sup>TH</sup> - Aug. 25<sup>TH</sup>**

**- PRESS PACK -**

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JUL. 30<sup>TH</sup> - AUG. 25<sup>TH</sup>: Pleasance Dome, EDINBURGH

JUL. 8<sup>TH</sup>: Theatre Royal, WAKEFIELD

JUL. 6<sup>TH</sup>: North Wall, OXFORD

### WHITE ROSE THEATRE'S AWARD-WINNING SHOW RETURNS!



# TONY!



# THE BLAIR MUSICALS



Book & Lyrics by Chris Bush, Music by Ian McCluskey

In 2007 Yorkshire based White Rose Theatre's *TONY! The Blair Musical* was one of the biggest hits of the Edinburgh Fringe, selling out its entire run and earning a string of rave reviews and international plaudits. Now Blair is back with a brand-new show, *Tony of Arabia*, playing in rep. with the original *TONY!* this summer. You can catch them both at the Pleasance Dome:

PLEASANCE DOME (VENUE 23). 30<sup>TH</sup> JUL. - 25<sup>TH</sup> AUG. (NOT 12<sup>TH</sup>) '08

5.30PM: 0131 556 6550 / [www.pleasance.co.uk](http://www.pleasance.co.uk)

*TONY!* premiered at the York Theatre Royal in July 2007 amidst a flurry of media attention before heading to Edinburgh where it made *The Telegraph's* top 20 shows of the festival and *The Independent's* top 5. Later *TONY!* transferred to the Pleasance, Islington as winner of the inaugural Sunday Times NSDF Edinburgh Competition, where it was No. 1 in the *Sunday Times Culture Agenda* and pick of the day in the *Evening Standard*.

**TONY! THE BLAIR MUSICAL:** Making Government Rock: Join Blair, Bush, Brown and the now infamous Tory Barbershop ('absolutely five-star' *Times*) for this intimate review of Tony's greatest hits. Relive the highs and lows, loves and losses of the Blair regime and rediscover why there aint no party like a Labour party.

**TONY OF ARABIA:** Blair's back, and he's teaching the world to sing. Thrill as Tony rescues the peace process, unites Europe and saves the planet. Meanwhile Gordon battles for Britain, Cherie has ambitions of her own, Cameron raps and George gets lost in the desert with a compass that won't point Middle-East.

"Sharp and slick - they hit their targets with unerring accuracy."  
Robert Dawson Scott, The Times.

"Hugely funny yet surprisingly sensitive"  
Jonathan Brown, The Independent

Artistic Director: Chris Bush  
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## What the critics said...

"The ghost of *Beyond the Fringe* must be smiling benignly down upon **TONY!** **Ruthlessly effective...** The lyrics to the infectiously catchy songs are spot-on."



Fiona Mountford, *The Evening Standard*

"A **joy to behold...** Composer Ian McCluskey provides a memorable score while writer/director Chris Bush is a master of the one-liner." ★★★★★ THE SCOTSMAN

"A **perfect slice of fringe comedy.**"  
Lloyd Evans, *The Spectator*

"Blair is **gloriously** and even **poignantly** portrayed by **James Duckworth**"  
Mark Monahan, *The Telegraph*

"The **best of political satires.** ... The laughs come hard and fast, the jokes are spot-on and the songs performed with flair."

Carmody Wilson, *The Herald* ★★★★★

"Sharp, engaging, original, and terrifically well performed, there just aren't enough positive words to say about this production." **Rachel Wade, BBC**

"Quite simply, **this is a knockout show...**

A lightning-paced gossip rag rampage through the Blair story, packed with great laugh-out loud gags, joyful performances, outlandish camp and sweeping melodrama."



Edinburgh Evening News

Paul Lowman, *York Press*

"This show is everything the Edinburgh Fringe Festival should be - **Well written, compellingly directed and performed** - a showcase oozing young, vibrant intelligence, talent and wit. **Do not miss it.**"

★★★★★ (★) LOUISE HILL, *British Theatre Guide*

"The lyrics are stunningly crafted, with a stomach-punch one-liner every 30 seconds... The non-linear plot takes a fanciful and often sympathetic view of Tony's time in office, played by a talented cast of six at a breakneck pace... I find myself struggling to find enough superlatives to describe just how good this show is. Just go and see it for yourself."

Pete Shaw, *Broadway Baby* ★★★★★



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### DID YOU KNOW...?

Cast member **Ed Duncan Smith** (son of former Tory leader *Iain*) made headlines in 2007 playing *Alastair Campbell* and his own father in the original **TONY!** This year Ed's back, his new roles including French president *Nicolas Sarkozy* and current Tory leader *David Cameron*.

The seating at the **Pleasance Dome** in Edinburgh where *White Rose Theatre* will be performing this August was originally built for New Labour and their 1997 electoral campaign where Tony addressed the assembled masses at Edinburgh University.

**TONY!** playwright *Chris Bush* will be presenting a whopping nine shows in Edinburgh this summer. As well as the two Tonys, Chris has penned an epic six show cycle with composer *Ian McCluskey* entitled *Lost Soul Music* and a new children's show *How Does the Kanga-Roo?* for *Rubber Duck Theatre*, playing at *C Venues* in Edinburgh.

Working titles for **TONY!** included *Call Me Tony* and *Tony Blair: A Life in Rock*, while *Tony of Arabia* was originally written under the title *President Blair*, an allusion to rumours of Tony taking on the EU presidency. This rejected title now lends its name to one of our most show-stopping new numbers.

**TONY!** was one of three Blair musicals premiered in 2007, the others being *Tony Blair: The Musical*, also at the *Edinburgh Fringe*, and *Blair on Broadway*, which played at the *Hen and Chickens* in *Islington*... But only **TONY!** received enough public support and critical acclaim to return in 2008!

Rumours of a **Gordon Brown** musical in 2009 complete with a full sixteen-piece bagpipe orchestra and lashings of Gaelic stoicism are sadly unfounded. Although a hip-hop/punk fusion light operetta depicting the formative years of **David Cameron** has not yet been ruled out.

## TONY OR Jesus?

TWO ICONIC LEADERS, BUT WHO DID WHAT?  
(ANSWERS ON A POSTCARD)

- WHO BROUGHT A LASTING, WORKABLE PEACE TO THE MIDDLE-EAST?
- WHO SPREAD A MESSAGE OF UNITY, LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING WHEREVER HE WENT?
- WHO OVERSAW A DECADE OF STABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH?
- WHO FED THE HUNGRY, CURED THE LAME AND SECURED THE 2012 OLYMPICS?
- WHO IS MATES WITH BONO?
- WHO DOES GEORGE W BUSH THINK IS HIS IMAGINARY FRIEND WHO ONLY TALKS TO HIM?
- WHO CAN ALWAYS BE RELIED UPON TO ROCK?

## WHITE ROSE THEATRE

White Rose Theatre was founded in 2005 by Artistic Director and **TONY!** playwright **Chris Bush**. Their first production was *There's a Hole in my Beckett*, the complete stageworks of Samuel Beckett condensed into twenty minutes. This success was followed up with *Olympia* later that year and the award-winning *Man & God* in 2006, marking White Rose's Edinburgh debut.

After the huge success of **TONY!** last year, White Rose are going from strength to strength, and forging links with exciting theatres all around the country. This Easter White Rose were delighted to open the **National Student Drama Festival** in Scarborough with an exclusive musical skit written specially for the launch.

For the latest news and production updates please visit [www.whiterosetheatre.co.uk](http://www.whiterosetheatre.co.uk)

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### COMPANY DETAILS AND BIOGRAPHIES

**CHRIS BUSH** (Writer/Director) Chris is an award-winning playwright and lyricist and the Artistic Director of White Rose Theatre. AS WRITER: includes *Harsh Reality* (Wimbledon Theatre - WINNER: National Young Playwright's Festival 2000), *Dearly Departed* (Diorama Studio Theatre, London), *Man & God* (Edinburgh and tour), *Olympia* (Drama Barn, York) and *TONY! The Blair Musical* (York Theatre Royal, C Venues Edinburgh, Pleasance Islington - WINNER - Sunday Times NSDF Edinburgh Fringe Competition). AS DIRECTOR: *Man & God*, *Olympia* and *TONY!* AS PERFORMER: includes *Ring Round the Moon* and *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Crucible Theatre, Sheffield) and *Faust* (international tour).

**IAN McCLUSKEY** (Composer/MD) AS COMPOSER: includes *The Glass Menagerie* (Drama Barn, York), *Vinegar Tom*, *TONY! The Blair Musical* and *Tony of Arabia*. AS PERFORMER: includes *Songs for a New World* (Stagecoach Theatre, York) *West Side Story* (CHMS) and the title role in *Jesus Christ Superstar* (CHMS). Ian is also a gigging singer and pianist, has directed bands, choirs and recorded popular albums.

**BRYONY DAVIES** (Producer) AS PRODUCER: includes *Songs for a New World* (Stagecoach Theatre, York and Edinburgh Fringe), *TONY! The Blair Musical* and *Tony of Arabia* (2008 tour) and *Lost Soul Music* (C Venues, Edinburgh). AS MD: includes *West Side Story* (CHMS) and work with York's Flying Ducks Theatre Company. AS MUSICIAN: Bryony plays flute, saxophone, piano, cello, trumpet and voice in venues from Hull jazz clubs to Wembley Arena. She has played lead reed in numerous productions including *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Fame* and *Cabaret* (Hull Truck).

**KATE WOMERSLEY** (Choreographer) AS CHOREOGRAPHER: includes *The Prophetess Libuse and other Czech Fairy Tales* (Friargate Theatre, York) *Rhinoceros* and *As You Like It* (Drama Barn, York) and *TONY! The Blair Musical* (2007 and 2008 tours). Kate has trained for seventeen years in all aspects of theatre dance, including ballet, tap and modern jazz. She is also experienced in street, freestyle, jazz and contemporary dance, and specialises in Early Modern Dance. She currently holds two ballet teaching qualifications.

**NEIL ARDEN** (Technical Director/Lighting Design) AS TD: includes the Perrier nominated *Epitaph* (Gilded Balloon, Edinburgh), *Our Country's Good* (The Redgrave, Bristol), *Mulgrave* (Whitby), *The Madman and the Nun* (York Theatre Royal) and *TONY! The Blair Musical* (2007 and 2008 tours), as well as over 20 shows at the University of York. In 2007 Neil made his directorial debut with *Songs For a New World* at the Stagecoach Theatre, York. Neil will be reviving this production at the Edinburgh Fringe this summer, playing at C Venues.

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## CAST BIOGRAPHIES (CONT.)

**JAMES DUCKWORTH** (Tony) THEATRE: recent credits include Josef K in *The Trial*, (Drama Barn, York) Prospero in *The Tempest* (Minster Gardens, York) and *Ruddigore*. James' musical alter-ego GranRojo has been recommended as an artist of the week by a panel including Melody Maker, NME and Rolling Stone.

**ELLIE COX** (Cherie) THEATRE: includes Jezebel in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Miss Bell in *Fame*, Rosalia in *West Side Story* (CHMS) *A Dead Woman on Holiday* (Drama Barn) and Jason Robert Brown's *Songs for a New World*. (Stagecoach) Ellie has also sung and played in numerous choirs, orchestras and ensembles, including the Zamar Gospel Choir.

**ALICE BOAGEY** (Cherie) THEATRE: includes *My Fair Lady*, *Carousel*, *West Side Story*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Love and Understanding* (Drama Barn) and most recently the title role in *Sweet Charity* (CHMS).

**MICHAEL SLATER** (Gordon) THEATRE: includes *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The King and I* (Trent Opera) and *West Side Story* (CHMS). AS DIRECTOR: includes *Guys and Dolls* and *Sweet Charity* (CHMS). Michael is also an experienced french horn player and plays in numerous orchestras.

**ED DUNCAN SMITH** (Alastair) THEATRE: includes Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*, *The Maids*, *Cruel and Tender*, *The Cut*, (Drama Barn) *Meet Me In The Bathroom*, (Stagecoach) *The Tempest* (Minster Gardens) and the lead role in *The Madman and the Nun* (York Theatre Royal). AS PRODUCER: *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *Pool (no water)* (Drama Barn). Ed also sang in the Eton College Chapel Choir and is a skilled violinist.

**JETHRO COMPTON** (Peter) THEATRE: includes *The Glass Menagerie*, *Morbid Curiosity*, (Drama Barn) and Oscar Lindquist in *Sweet Charity* (CHMS). AS DIRECTOR: *Subletting* (Drama Barn). Jethro is also an award-winning lighting designer, shows including *Celebrity*, *A Clockwork Orange* (York Theatre Royal), *Trainspotting* (C Venues, Edinburgh) and *Metamorphosis* (NSDF - WINNER: Best Lighting Design).

**GAVIN WHITWORTH** (George) Gavin trained for four years at the Royal College of Music and recently graduated from the University of York, where he specialises in French horn and piano and sings in the award-winning Zamar Gospel Choir. AS MD: includes *Sweet Charity* (CHMS) and *Songs For a New World* (C Venues, Edinburgh). ASSISTANT MD: *West Side Story* (CHMS). *TONY!* marks one of Gavin's first ventures onto the stage without a set of keys to hide behind.

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★★★★★  
**Evening Standard**  
 ★★★★★  
**Herald**

**TONY! THE BLAIR MUSICAL**

He's back, and this time it's Governmental. If you missed the sell-out smash that was **TONY!** in 2007 then here's your chance to relive Blair's glory years all over again in this intimate revue of Tony's Greatest Hits.

*For Tony Prime Minister was only ever a back-up career plan: who wants to be a world leader when you could be Bono?*

May 1997, and a jaded nation awakes to a bright new future.

Tony Blair is the man of the moment, a man with the hand of history on his shoulder, a man with a mission: Tony Blair is going to make Government rock.

Starring Blair, Bush, Brown and the now infamous Tony Barbershop quartet ('absolutely five-star' *Times*), **TONY!** will remind you why there still ain't no party like a Labour party.

# TONY!

## THE BLAIR MUSICALS

**Book & Lyrics by Chris Bush, Music by Ian McCluskey**

James Duckworth ..... Tony Blair  
 Ellie Cox/Alice Boagey ..... Cherie Blair/Princess Diana  
 Michael Slater ..... Gordon Brown/Jeremy Paxman  
 Gavin Whitworth ..... George W Bush/John Prescott  
 Jethro Compton ..... Peter Mandelson/Alistair Darling  
 Ed Duncan Smith ..... Alastair Campbell/David Cameron

Bryony Davies ..... Producer  
 Kate Womersley ..... Choreographer  
 Neil Arden ..... Technical Director

**JULY 6TH: NORTH WALL ARTS CENTRE, OXFORD**  
**JULY 8TH: THEATRE ROYAL, WAKEFIELD**  
**JULY 30TH-AUG. 25TH: PLEASANCE, EDINBURGH**

★★★★★  
**Scotsman**  
 ★★★★★ (★)  
**British Theatre Guide**



**TONY OF ARABIA**

Gone but not forgotten: He may have left the band, but he's still got the music. One country was never enough, and now Tony's teaching the world to sing...

A year's a long time in politics, and Tony's sure been keeping busy. Thrill as everyone's favourite ex-PM rescues the peace process, unites Europe and saves the planet. Meanwhile Gordon battles for Britain, Cameron raps, Cherie has ambitions of her own and George gets lost in the desert with a compass that won't point Middle East.

From peace brokering in Palestine to professorships and presidential campaigns, Tony has made it clear he's not ready to leave the limelight just yet. So keep up-to-date with this satirical smorgasbord of topical comedy and show-stopping tunes.

