



'WE WILL ROCK YOU' UK TOUR CAST ANNOUNCED

*Jonathan Wilkes, Kevin Kennedy, Brenda Edwards,
Georgina Hagen and Ashley Russell to star in record -
breaking musical!*

Actor and musician Jonathan Wilkes and former Coronation Street star Kevin Kennedy, will star in this year's upcoming 'We Will Rock You' UK Tour. They will appear in the smash-hit Queen and Ben Elton musical alongside X Factor finalist Brenda Edwards, star of ITV1's Britannia High Georgina Hagen and I'd Do Anything's Nancy contestant Ashley Russell, who are also announced today. The eagerly anticipated 43-week regional tour opens at Manchester's Palace Theatre on 21st March.

Jonathan Wilkes will perform the role of 'Khashoggi', the Chief of the Secret Police who answers to Killer Queen's every command, whilst Manchester soap star Kevin Kennedy will assume the role of 'Pop', a librarian who is stuck in his 'hippie' past and is searching to find answers to the end of rock music. Brenda Edwards will play the domineering role of 'Killer Queen', Head of Globalsoft, the corporation responsible for the banning of all instruments and musical originality. TV star Georgina Hagen will star in

the production as 'Meat', the main female of the Bohemians and Ashley Russell, will play the role of the 'Teacher', who befriends students whilst actually working as a spy for Globalsoft's Secret Police.

The production opens at Manchester's Palace Theatre on the 21st March for a twelve-week season. It will then transfer to play Sunderland Empire, Birmingham Hippodrome, Bristol Hippodrome, and ends 2009 with ten weeks at Edinburgh Playhouse commencing early November. It is written and directed by Ben Elton and Arlene Phillips continues in the role of Musical Staging and Choreography.

Speaking about the tour, Jonathan Wilkes comments, 'I am chuffed to be part of this show and very excited to be working with such a fantastic company'

Kevin Kennedy is equally as enthusiastic, 'I am over the moon at the prospect of appearing in We Will Rock You. Queen have always been my idols and I have seen the show every time I have been down to London never dreaming that one day I would play Pop. Opening in Manchester is such a bonus, I hope all my Corrie mates will come to the first night!'

Brenda Edwards says, 'I am really excited to be a part of this huge rock musical tour and am looking forward to working with some rock and comedy legends as well as singing some Killer Queen songs!'

'I am honoured to be part of the company' says Georgina Hagen, 'I can't wait until performances start in March'.

Ashley Russell comments, 'I am completely ecstatic to be part of the We Will Rock You production. I can't wait to get started on stage'

Having proved its enormous rapport with the public by achieving the distinction of becoming the longest running musical ever staged at the West End's Dominion theatre where it is currently playing its seventh year, the musical will rock across the UK from March 2009 while continuing to play in London. The Dominion production is presently booking until October 2009.

Announcing the tour, Queen's Brian May said: "We are excited to be able, finally, to send a brand new top class WWRV company out on tour around the UK. We are completely hands on, and will be visiting! The Mother Ship, in the Dominion Theatre, London, will be rockin' on all the while, keeping the home fires burning, until further notice!"

The touring production reaches local UK theatres carrying with it an impressive legacy: when it first became news that one of Britain's most phenomenally successful comedy writers Ben Elton was teaming up with legends of rock, Queen, for a musical there was much speculation on what such a unique collaboration would turn out. Especially when screen icon Robert de Niro became so impressed after attending the original workshop that his company Tribeca came on board as American partner.

The result was a new chapter in theatre history - "We Will Rock You" - a rock 'theatrical' which defied all comparisons and has gone on to rock London's West End and theatres around the world for the past six years to an audience of well beyond 6 million.

With the London production alone having been seen by close on 4 million people, played over 2300 performances, and grossed more than £100 million at the box office, "We Will Rock You" is well on the way to becoming one of the most successful rock musicals ever.

Says producer Phil McIntyre: "We are bursting with excitement, at last provincial audiences will get a true rock extravaganza. We can't wait to see the first night reactions throughout the country. We Will Rock You will rock the UK; it is the biggest and best rock theatrical!"

The show brings together a production and design team behind some of the biggest international theatre productions and rock tours.

Production designers Mark Fisher and Willie Williams have created set designs for Pink Floyd, The Rolling Stones, Janet Jackson, and the acclaimed multi-media shows for U2.

Costume Designer Tim Goodchild has already achieved three Olivier Awards for his work in the West End. Choreographer Arlene Phillips has shown her distinctive style in some of the biggest stage musicals of the past two decades, including *Starlight Express*, *Grease* and *Saturday Night Fever*. Bobby Aitken (*Grease* and *Mamma Mia!*) is Sound Designer.

And with Queen's Brian May and Roger Taylor as music supervisors, and behind the cast "a band without parallel in the theatre, reflecting the true power of the mighty Queen" you'd be right to expect "We Will Rock You" to rock as fiercely as the best of Queen's concerts.

Writer Ben Elton has fashioned a hilarious futurist comedy around more than 24 of Queen's biggest hit songs delivered in a show that boasts the scale and spectacle that marked Queen's live performances.

"This show is all about legend," says Ben Elton. "We take the legend of Queen and create our own fantastical story of young kids battling the might corporations who want to suppress their individuality and their love of music. They need a hero who can help them in their struggle, and we have two – the dreamer Galileo and the sassy rock chick Scaramouche. Guess who ends up winning?"

Says Brian May: "The amazing bonus is that Ben's script subtly works as a metaphor too. People definitely come out of the theatre feeling that in a strange way they now know us, Queen, and our struggle, our journey."

And Roger Taylor: "Creating the show with Ben was very much a three way thing. Which was great, because Ben has such a great active mind and has been a great pleasure to work with. He has a great fertile mind that never ever stops churning out ideas. He's written a fantastic idea for the sequel. I counted 23 more hits he can put in it. Let's see if people like this one first!"

About The Cast

Jonathan Wilkes has previously worked as a television presenter and musician but has more recently been seen on stage in productions such as 'Guys and Dolls' and 'The Rocky Horror Show' and played the lead role in last year's touring production of 'The Wedding Singer'. Actor *Kevin Kennedy* is best known for his role as 'Curly Watts' in the long running soap *Coronation Street*, which he starred in for seven years. He then moved to the stage, starring in productions of 'The Extra Factor' and 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Luton born **Brenda Edwards** rose to fame in ITV1's talent show 'The X Factor'. Since appearing on the show, she was chosen for the role of Mamma Morton in the West End production of 'Chicago', which she has played at various intervals until early this year. *Georgina Hagen*, known best for her role as 'Lauren' in the ITV1 show 'Britannia High', has appeared in various stage productions, including the London Palladium's 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang'. Actress and singer *Ashley Russell*, gained public prominence when she appeared as one of the Nancy contestants in last year's BBC1 show 'I'd Do Anything'. Amongst others, she has performed in regional productions such as 'Richard III' and 'The Waiting Room'.

We Will Rock You – not just a show, but a promise!

We Will Rock You UK Tour 2009:

Tickets on sale now – Theatre Booking Details:

MANCHESTER PALACE THEATRE

Saturday 21st March – Saturday 6th June 2009

Press Night – 25th March

Performances: Mon–Sat 7.30pm, Wed & Sat 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Tickets: £16.00–£40.00 (Booking fee may apply)

Ticketmaster: 0844 847 2275

[*www.palaceandoperahouse.org.uk*](http://www.palaceandoperahouse.org.uk)

Groups of 10+ call freephone: 0800 587 5007 (Mon–Fri 10am–6pm)

SUNDERLAND EMPIRE

Wednesday 10th – Saturday 27th June 2009

Press Night – 11th June

Performances: Mon–Sat 7.30pm, Wed & Sat 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Tickets: £12.50 – £37.50 (Booking fee may apply)

Ticketmaster: 0844 847 2499

[*www.sunderlandempire.org.uk*](http://www.sunderlandempire.org.uk)

BIRMINGHAM HIPPODROME

Wednesday 1st July 2009 – Saturday 5th September 2009

Press Night – 2nd July

Performances: Mon–Sat 7.30pm, Wed & Sat 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Tickets: £25.00 – £40.00 (Booking fee may apply)

Telephone: 0844 338 5000

[*www.birminghamhippodrome.com*](http://www.birminghamhippodrome.com)

BRISTOL HIPPODROME

Wednesday 16th September 2009 – Saturday 31st October 2009

Press Night – 17th September

Performances: Mon–Sat 7.30pm, Wed & Sat 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Tickets: £27.50 – £40.00 (Booking fee may apply)

Telephone: 0844 847 2325

www.bristolhippodrome.org.uk

EDINBURGH PLAYHOUSE

Wednesday 4th November 2009 – Saturday 9th January 2010

Press Night – 9th November

Performances: Mon–Sat 7.30pm, Wed & Sat 2.30pm & 7.30pm

Tickets: £22.00 – £40.00 (Booking fee may apply)

Telephone: 0844 8471660

www.edinburghplayhouse.org.uk

OFFICIAL WEBSITE – www.wewillrockyou.co.uk

Further Queen information – www.queenonline.com

WWRY Stills can be downloaded at:

http://homepage.mac.com/richard.gray/WWRY_LON/FileSharing137.html

WE WILL ROCK YOU. A Phil McIntyre Entertainment/Queen Theatrical Productions/ Tribeca Production.

Editor's Notes:

In addition to the London West End production We Will Rock You has already completed over 100 shows in Melbourne and in Sydney, and opened in Japan, Spain, Las Vegas, Russia, Germany, South Africa, Switzerland, Austria and throughout Asia. The current Toronto production has become something of a phenomenon. Originally scheduled to play seven weeks, the show was quickly extended again and again ultimately playing 61 weeks at the Canon Theatre before transferring to the Panasonic theatre where it continues to run.

The show has developed an extraordinary devotion from fans: on Tuesday, January 25, 2005, Londoners, Kevin Morrissey and Julie Daw, were married in Las Vegas where they had traveled to see the production there of their favorite musical, "We Will Rock You". For their honeymoon evening festivities, they again sat through the show at the Paris Resort, Las Vegas. It was the 61st time for Kevin and the 42nd time for Julie seeing "We Will Rock You". Following the show, the couple shared their honeymoon celebrations with the cast who made their evening by providing a backstage tour. The couple rounded off their honeymoon by spending their final night in Vegas again at the show.