

## Capital of counter-culture!

An '08-commissioned musical telling the fascinating tale of an iconic Liverpool nightclub wowed audiences at the Everyman in September and October.

Created by award-winning Liverpool writer Mark Davies Markham, Eric's celebrated the spirit of the musical hothouse of the late 70s and early 80s, out of which came bands such as Teardrop Explodes, Echo and the Bunnymen, The Mighty Wah!, Big in Japan, OMD and Frankie Goes to Hollywood.

It starred Graham Bickley as ex-rebel Joe with Liverpool actor Stephen Fletcher as Joe's younger self, looking back on his youth as he battled for survival from his hospital bed.

The musical - capturing an era when The Clash, The Ramones and The Sex Pistols ignited a creative spark that fired a generation - earned rave reviews, including a rare 10 out of 10 from the Liverpool Echo, who described the show as 'completely irresistible'.



## A performance fit for Kings

Pete Postlethwaite's triumphant return to the Liverpool stage that launched his stellar career proved to be a major highlight of the '08 theatre programme.

The Hollywood star, 63 took on one of the great male roles, King Lear, at the Liverpool Everyman in November.

It was an emotional homecoming for Postlethwaite who began his acting career at the Everyman before carving out a hugely successful film career - his impressive c.v. including *The Constant Gardener*, *Brassed Off*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Usual Suspects*.

Often described as the greatest play in the English language, Shakespeare's haunting portrayal of power at family and state level was one of the most hotly anticipated productions of '08 and sold out months before its run.

The classic play was revealed in a startling new light thanks to an imaginative production by Rupert Goold, toast of the UK theatre scene.

And Postlethwaite brought a spell-binding and majestic performance to the production, at the theatre which means more to him than any other in the world.

## A magical journey

The awe-inspiring interior of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral was the setting for a truly intriguing, spiritual and imaginative new commission for '08.

One Step Forward, One Step Back was a performance and installation which enthralled thousands of visitors to the Cathedral in April and May.

Created by Brighton-based arts company dreamthinkspeak and inspired by Dante's 'Divine Comedy', the piece weaved a magical one-hour journey for small groups through areas of the cathedral previously unseen by the public - using film, music, installation, models and live performance.

Drawing in actors, artists and technicians from across the city, the journey ended at the roof of the Cathedral, presenting visitors with an amazing view across the city.

One Step Forward, One Step Back was a sell-out, and extra performances had to be scheduled to meet demand.





## Adelphi's fantastic reception

Theatre goers were treated to joyful celebration of Liverpool and the city's most iconic hotel at the Playhouse from June until July.

Romantic Musical 'Once Upon a Time at the Adelphi' transported audiences back to 1930's Liverpool, as the glitz and glamour of Hollywood poured off the luxury liners for their first taste of England – and a night in the city's most fashionable hotel.

The show saw a cast of West End names joining forces with students from Liverpool's very own performing arts college LIPA.

The production was widely praised for its high-energy and fusion of history and humour.



## Shankly remembered

The story of one of football's greatest icons took centre stage as part of the '08 celebrations.

The Shankly Show, a one-man play about the life and times of legendary Liverpool manager Bill Shankly, was a massive hit with audiences.

Commissioned by the Liverpool Culture Company for 2008, the 90-minute show was written by Liverpool playwright Andrew Sherlock and performed by Scottish actor Alexander "Sandy" West. It received critical acclaim following its world premiere at the Olympia in April, where Sir Tom Finney and a host of ex-Liverpool players were special guests. The Shankly Show went on to tour to Shankly's birthplace in Scotland and attracted an audience of 8,500 for its re-run at the Royal Court in Liverpool.

It will be remembered for giving thousands of people the chance to experience the myth, emotion and epic stature of the charismatic manager who is still revered 27 years after his death.



It's been a great year for the Phil and for the city. The spotlight has been on us and I think what we've delivered has been absolutely fantastic. It's been a pleasure to contribute to such a range of events, and to perform with so many great artists, including our two Artists Laureate Sir Simon Rattle and Vladimir Ashkenazy, Sir Paul McCartney, Bryn Terfel, Midori, Elvis Costello and Ringo Starr. We had given over 30 world premieres in 18 months by the end of 2008. It's a great achievement and a great contribution to the 2008 legacy.



**Vasily Petrenko**  
RLPO principal conductor

WARNING: Use of strong language - not for the easily offended!

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