

**NEW CEO AND DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING – STEVE MARMION
ANNOUNCES HIS FIRST SEASON AT WATFORD PALACE THEATRE**

Watford Palace Theatre is proud to be announcing a thrilling new vision, ambition, and season of work for Watford's stunning 115-year-old venue. Complete with a full front of house makeover promising "the best cuppa tea in town" with a BYO food offer, plus brand-new opportunities for young people and communities to get involved.

New *CEO & Director of Programming **Steve Marmion*** said: *"I'm thrilled to be unveiling this programme of work and activities for this important and brilliant theatre. Going right back to our Music Hall roots we have something for everyone across a packed season of the very best in theatre, music, drag, comedy, and cabaret. The Watford Palace Young Company has been re-imagined mirroring what we have on our stage through regular groups and masterclasses covering everything from stand-up to singing, drag and dance! We are also delighted to be re-launching our front of house facilities with fast Wi-Fi, charging points and comfy chairs – you can even bring a packed lunch – just let us do the drinks!"*

SITTING IN LIMBO
World Premiere

The theatre will be marking Windrush day, and the scandal around the British government's treatment of those involved, with a brand-new stage adaptation of hit BBC film ***Sitting in Limbo***, produced by Viva Theatre and Watford Palace Theatre

The story follows Anthony Bryan, who, after 50 years in the UK, is wrongfully detained by the Home Office and threatened with deportation.

The 2020 BBC film won the BAFTA for Best Single Drama. It was written by Bryan's half-brother, novelist Stephen S. Thompson and has been adapted for the stage by Shenagh Cameron.

Running from 19 - 22 June 2024 at Watford Palace Theatre.

TWO OF US
World Premiere, with a transfer to HOME, Manchester

A co-production between ***Watford Palace Theatre*** and ***Northern Players Theatre Company*** and starring ***Barry Sloane*** (Jerusalem, Boys from the Blackstuff) and ***Richard Short*** (Jerusalem, Joel Coen's The Tragedy of Macbeth) the story takes place six years after the bitter break-up of *The Beatles*.

Paul pays a visit to John's apartment in New York City. Unannounced. It would be the final time they ever met. **Two of Us** is what may have happened that day and is the story of two working class boys who loved each other.

Two Of Us was a major motion picture (Paramount) written by *Mark Stanfield* and directed by *Sir Michael Lindsay-Hogg*. The play has been written by *Stanfield, Short & Sloane* with Scot Williams directing the production. It will also be touring to **HOME** in Manchester.

Running 13 – 21 September 2024 at Watford Palace Theatre.

FIGHT NIGHT

UK Premiere of the new version of this show, following a USA Tour (during the election season: Charleston, Blacksburg, Boston, Ann Arbor, Durham, Minneapolis)

Coinciding with the (very likely) election activities of the Autumn this local powerhouse has managed to tempt international theatre masters *Ontroerend Goed* to perform their UK premiere of **Fight Night**, a show in which the audience all have keypads and democracy runs riot as the actors are voted off the stage.

“Without even a single political reference, *Ontroerend Goed's Fight Night* makes a precarious analysis of the consensus politics our democratic system has fallen into. That's impressive.” - **Evelyne Coussens**, *De Morgen*

Running 24 – 26 October 2024 at Watford Palace Theatre.

ALADDIN

A new pantomime written by **Steve Marmion** and directed by **James Williams**. Join us for a magic carpet ride like no other, as Aladdin takes to the skies of Watford. Evil baddie Abanazar – check! Glamorous Princess – check! Magical and funky genie – check! And, of course, all the classics you expect from one of the longest running pantos on the planet – big songs, great gags, and Dame Widow Twanky herself. Consider all your Christmas wishes granted!

Christmas means **Aladdin** is landing his magic carpet at the Palace. This year will see the show re-invigorated as the theatre combines it's 100-years of panto producing history with Steve's huge experience of the style - having helmed iconic productions at the *Lyric Hammersmith*, *Oxford Playhouse* and *Hall for Cornwall*.

Running 30 November – 31 December 2024 at Watford Palace Theatre.

BITCH BOXER

Produced by **Watford Palace Theatre**, written by **Charlie Josephine** (*Cowbois* (RSC)), directed by **Prime Isaac** and designed by **Hazel Low**.

“Women can't box? You watch.”

The 2012 London Olympics is the first-time women are allowed to compete and Chloe Jackson is going to absolutely smash it, but sometimes life smashes back. Channelling her aggression, fears, and determination into the disciplined world of boxing, will Chloe defeat all in, and outside of the ring?

A show about love, about family, about destroying society's expectations, and about rebuilding them...See you in the ring.

Charlie Josephine's (*Cowboys* at the RSC and *I Joan* at The Globe) debut play receives its first major production in 10 years – at the theatre where they grew up. As a former member of the Palace's youth theatre, they began their working relationship with new CEO Steve Marmion on a young people's show at the theatre in 2005.

Running 28 February – 10 March 2025 at Watford Palace Theatre followed by a National Tour in 2025.

WHIPPED UP!

Produced by **Watford Palace Theatre** and written and conceived by **Jill Rogati**, **Whipped Up!** is an interactive performance for the trickiest of audience members – babies!

It follows an eager-to-please 50s-style diner server on their first day on the job – where the baby is the customer, and caregivers are along for the ride. As the server waits on their "demanding" clientele (imagine babies doing what babies do best – creating adorable chaos!), the server grows increasingly frazzled – and more and more entertaining! Stimulating for tiny audience members, and hilarious for parents/adults.

Watford Palace Theatre will be taking the show out on the road and touring the region in 2025.

PALACE OF ENTERTAINMENT

Drag, dance and variety make a strong showing with **Ballet Black**, **Black is the Color of My Voice**, Frozen Light's **The Bar at the Edge of Time**, the return of **Queenz: Drag Me To The Disco**, and Halloween treat **Shock Horror: A Ghost Story**. The Palace are also co-producing and touring a new live version of the hit BBC podcast **Uncanny**. They also aim to engage with local gamers in Watford by bringing a variety of computer game titles to the stage, bridging the gap between the virtual and theatrical worlds. The **South Asian Comedy Festival** in partnership with **Soho Theatre**, will be showcasing the best in the business from across the globe.

The community continue to share this local cultural jewel with the return of Cassio Productions with their performance of *Our House*, a massive Diwali celebration in November, and a Chinese Culture Show produced by Watford Chinese Association for Chinese New Year 2025. All this is alongside various community groups using the

front of house café and bar as their regular meeting space (get in touch with the theatre directly if you'd like to do the same).

STAND UP'S

The Autumn is packed with their world-class programme of big-name stand-ups and comedians including **Russell Kane** (*Evil Genius*), **Rob Beckett** (*Rob & Romesh Vs...*), **Ed Gamble** (*Traitors Uncloaked*), **Bring Your Own Baby Comedy** and **The Scummy Mummies Greatest Hits Show**.

BANDS & TALKS

Bands and talks include **Watford Jazz Junction**, **Stewart Copeland** (*The Police*), and tribute acts including: **Tiny Dancer** (*Elton John*), **Legend** (*Bob Marley*), **Taylor Swift Tribute** and **Lost In Music**.

FAMILY PROGRAMMING

Families have a very full programme which includes, **Horrible Histories**, **Room on the Broom**, **Comedy Club 4 Kids**, **The Very Hungry Caterpillar**, **Science Museum LIVE**, **Morgan & West Massive Magic Show for Kids**, **Milkshake! Live on Holiday** and **Errol's Garden**.

Watford Palace Theatre was delighted to announce earlier this year its big Young Company summer production **The SpongeBob Musical: Youth Edition**. The musical, specially tailored for young actors, will run over six performances at Watford Palace Theatre from 2 to 4 August 2024.

Watford Palace Young Company, formally Hertfordshire County Youth Theatre, has been performing at Watford Palace Theatre for the past 20 years with productions including *James and the Giant Peach*, *The Witches* and *Peter Pan*.

NOTES TO EDITORS

WATFORD PALACE THEATRE

www.watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk

We are Watford's Palace of Entertainment. A great night out. The best shows. Something for everyone. We bring the world to Watford with theatre, comedy, cabaret, drag, dance, stand-up, film, musical, panto, bands, café, bar, groups, masterclasses, popcorn and loads more. We take Watford to the world through careers in the arts, skills, training, West-End transfers, and touring as a local launchpad with a national profile.

Watford Palace Theatre is a charity and generously funded by Arts Council England and Watford Borough Council.

The **Watford Palace Theatre Young & People's Company** offer regular weekly groups and masterclasses to anyone aged 7 and above. Their work reflects everything we have on our stages and gives anyone the chance to experience theatre, performance and all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes. More details available at <https://watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk/take-part/>

STEVE MARMION

Steve has been working in the creative industries for over 20 years and was Co-Chief Executive and Artistic Director of Soho Theatre (2010-18) then established PantoCo Ltd – a company specialising in large scale family shows.

He is an acclaimed theatre executive, producer, director and writer who is committed to live performance for people who don't traditionally attend and seeking out new artists with stories and insights we have never heard before. In 1996 his first play 97 – A play about the victims of the Hillsborough Tragedy was the story of his experience as an 11-year-old boy attending the match that day.

Over his time with Soho Theatre the company played to nearly 1.5 million people and grew annual audiences from 80,000 to 250,000. Its yearly turnover increased from £1.2million to almost £6million. It won numerous awards including the company's first three Olivier Awards, and four Edinburgh Comedy Awards. He also established its record-breaking digital platform Soho on Demand and was Executive Producer on its first 14 films (now available through Amazon Prime).

www.stevemarmion.com www.pantoco.com

LISTINGS

WATFORD PALACE THEATRE

Address: Watford Palace Theatre, 20 Clarendon Road, Watford, WD17 1JZ

Box Office: 01923 225 671

Production Artwork: Available to download [HERE](#)

Theatre Logo: Available to download [HERE](#)

LIST OF SHOWS - 2024

Frankie Goes To Bollywood	25 April – 11 May
Ukulele Jam	7 May
Help I Sexted My Boss Live Podcast Screening	14 May
Bring Your Own Baby Comedy 9	15 May
NT Live: Nye	15 May
Watford Jazz Junction Gala Show	16 May
Tiny Dancer: The Music of Elton John	18 May
Uncanny	23 – 24 May
Morgan & West's Massive Magic Show For Kids	31 May
Milkshake! Live on Holiday	1 June
Macbeth (Screening):	5 June

Sitting in Limbo	19 – 22 June
Bring Your Own Baby Comedy 10	10 – 20 June
Lost in Music	27 June
Science Museum: The Live Stage Show	29 June
The Scummy Mummies Greatest Hits Show	4 July
Comedy Club 4 Kids Two	6 July
Legend: The Music of Bob Marley	12 July
Bring Your Own Baby Comedy 11	11 – 17 July
Wifi Wars TWO	20 July
Errol's Garden	25 July
Taylor Swift Tribute	26 July
Horrible Histories	27 July
The SpongeBob Musical: Youth Edition	2 – 4 August
Two of Us	13 – 21 September
Andalucia	25 September
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	27 – 28 September
Wifi Wars THREE	29 September
Black is the Color of My Voice	3 October
Ballet Black Double Bill: Heroes	9 October
Ed Gamble – Hot Diggity Dog	10 October
Fight Night	24 – 26 October
Shock Horror: A Ghost Story	30 October – 2 November
Stewart Copeland: Have I Said Too Much	6 November
Queenz: Drag Me to the Disco	8 November
Room on the Broom	9 – 10 November
Rob Beckett: Giraffe	20 November
Aladdin	30 November – 31 December
<u>2025</u>	
Russell Kane: Hyperactive	30 January
Bitch Boxer	28 February – 10 March

Socials:

Website: watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk

X/Twitter/Instagram/TikTok: @watfordpalace

Facebook: Watford Palace Theatre

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