

Líam Rudden – Must See Theatre No 1 February 2024

From Hamilton to Hollywood's Broderick and Parker, new writing to bite-size drama and a magical trip along the Yellow Brick Road, February has it all.

What better way to open a new monthly theatre column than with the arrival of, arguably, the hottest ticket on the planet right now, Hamilton, Lin-Manuel Miranda's blockbuster musical, which comes to the Festival Theatre for a nine week season (28 February-27 April).

Welcome to 'Líam Rudden – Must See Theatre', my new monthly column exclusive to The Edinburgh Reporter in which I shall be recommending the best shows to see in Edinburgh, and beyond, in the coming weeks. Each month, I'll select my Must See shows coming to the city and picking one Hot Ticket to catch if taking a London theatre break, along with production news and maybe even the odd bit of showbiz gossip.

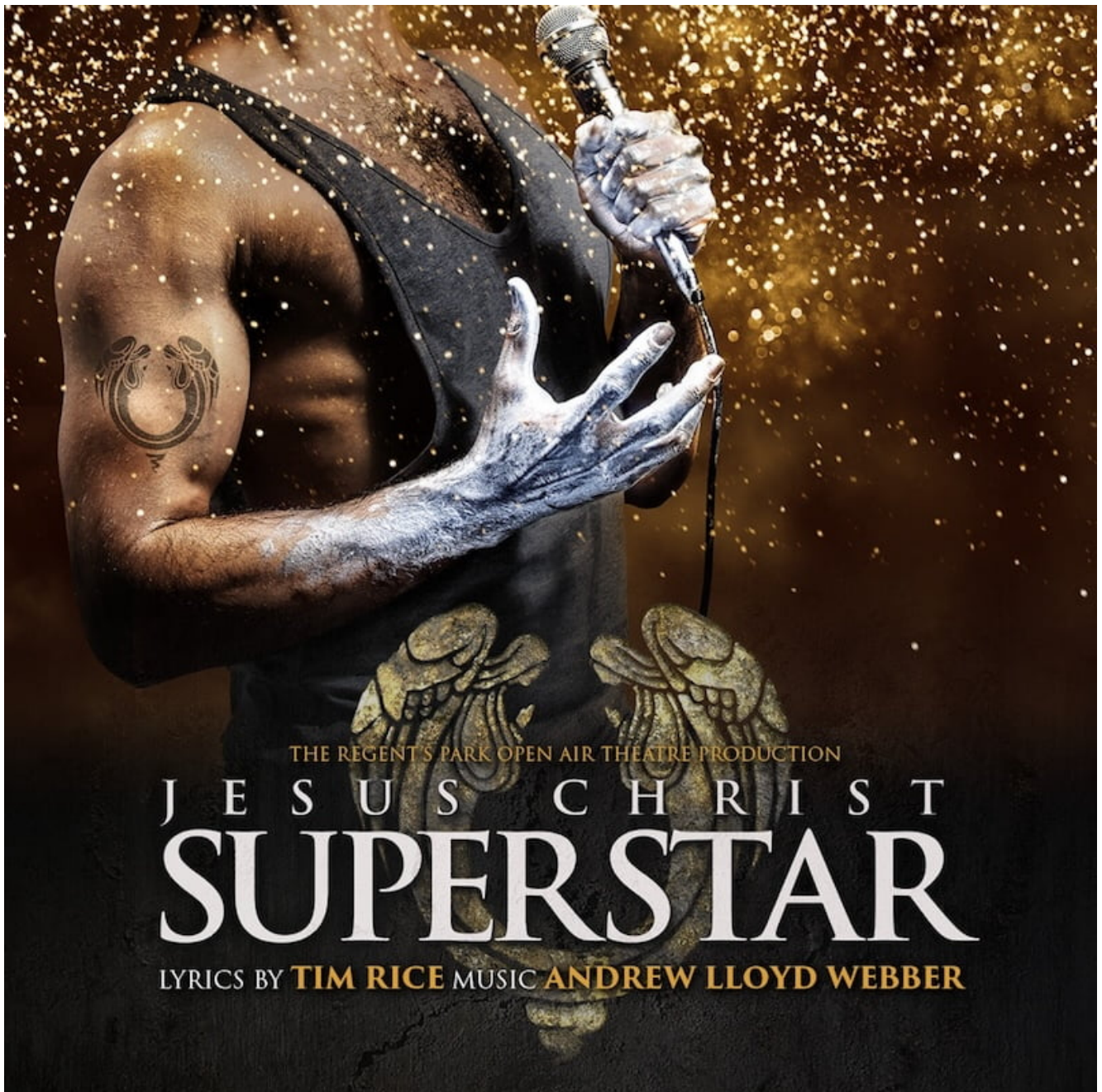


Right, back to Hamilton, the story of one of America's founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton, 'an immigrant from the West Indies who became George Washington's right-hand man during the Revolutionary War and helped shape the very foundations of the America we know today'.

After seeing the original London West End cast in 2018, I wrote, 'Hamilton is a magical, engaging spectacular laced with a dark vein of humour that makes for a glorious fun evening'. Sung-through, the score blends hip-hop, jazz, blues, rap, R&B and Broadway ensuring the story fairly rolls along. I also noted at the time, 'The raps are insanely catchy and the energy and talent on stage, mesmerising'. If you have tickets, you're in for a treat. If not, there are limited seats still available at many performances.

Running time 2 hours 45 minutes including interval. Tickets £25 - £99.50

<https://www.capitaltheatres.com/whats-on/all-shows/hamilton/2158>



Two very different musicals tour to The Playhouse this month, the first of which has one of Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's most powerful compositions, I Don't Know How To Love Him. Sung by Mary Madeline. For me it is the highlight of any production of Jesus Christ Superstar (6-10 February), so I'm looking forward to seeing Timothy Sheader's new production which was originally staged by London's Regent's Park Open Air Theatre and won the 2017 Olivier Award for Best Musical Revival.

Set against the backdrop of an extraordinary series of events during the final weeks in the life of Jesus Christ, as seen

through the eyes of Judas, if any musical should carry the tagline 'a tale as old as time' it is perhaps this one, other showstoppers to listen out for are *Gethsemane* and *the anthemic Superstar*.

Performances Tuesday-Saturday, 7.30pm, Wednesday & Saturday 2.30pm. Running time 1 hour 50 minutes including interval. Tickets £13-£68

<https://www.atgtickets.com/shows/jesus-christ-superstar/edinburgh-playhouse/>



Just close your eyes, click your heels and think, 'There's no

place like home' and you may well find yourself back at The Playhouse a week later as, direct from London's West End, comes Michael Harrison's brand new production of The Wizard Of Oz (13-17 February).

Yes, it's time to follow the yellow brick road with Dorothy, Toto and her unlikely friends as they determine to defeat The Wicked Witch of the West, played by RuPaul's Drag Race UK winner The Vivienne.

Watch out too for the ever popular Gary Wilmot as The Wizard – last time I saw him on The Playhouse boards was as Bill Snibson in the 1983 tour of Me And My Girl. His casting might just assuage the fact I've never been a fan of L Frank Baum's psychedelic fantasyland. Generations are, however, so I'm hoping this is the production to change my mind. Altogether now, We're Off To See The Wizard...

Running time 2 hours 5 minutes including interval. Tickets £13 - £79

<https://www.atgtickets.com/shows/the-wizard-of-oz/edinburgh-playhouse/>



Shauna Macdonald and Jess Hardwick in *Two Sisters*

If drama is your thing, The Lyceum is always the place to be and this month, a new play by the theatre's artistic director David Greig, starring Shauna Macdonald, Jess Hardwick and Erik Olsson receives its premiere.

A co-production with Malmö Stadsteater, *Two Sisters* (10 February-2 March) reflects on who we were at 16, who we became, and the gap between these expectations: Emma and Amy return to their childhood paradise, a seaside caravan park. The park has changed and childhood is now a distant memory. With career anxieties and romantic complications, resurfacing memories remind them how far, or not, they have come from their teenage selves.

If you'd like a deeper insight into the work, there's a post show discussion after the evening performance on 27 February with members of the cast, creative team and writer.

Running time TBC. Tickets £16-£38 (Previews £15)

<https://lyceum.org.uk/events/two-sisters#dates-and-times>



Matthew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker

Thinking of taking a theatre break? February's London Hot Ticket, is a Must See for fans of Ferris Bueller and Sex And The City, Neil Simon's Plaza Suite (until 31 March), stars real-life husband and wife Matthew Broderick, Sarah Jessica Parker as not one, but three different couples in one famous hotel room. Karen and Sam are a long-married pair whose relationship may be headed for an early checkout. Muriel and Jesse are former high school sweethearts who seem destined for an extended stay. And Norma and Roy are the mother and father of the bride, ready to celebrate their daughter's nuptials – if only they can get her out of the bathroom.

In New York, Plaza Suite became the must-have ticket for Broadway audiences playing to sold-out houses and shattering multiple box-office records at the Hudson Theatre, in London, see it at The Savoy Theatre.

Running time TBA. Tickets £40 (daily lottery)-£300
<https://www.atgtickets.com/shows/plaza-suite/savoy-theatre/>

Finally, if you're hungry for a bite-sized slice of lunchtime theatre, *A Play, A Pie, And A Pint* returns for another season at The Traverse with *Jack*, by Liam Moffat (22 February-2 March), a darkly comic monologue exploring life, love, loss and hope, all with the help of man's best friend. When newly christened puppy Jack's reluctant owner's life spirals into self-destruction, booze, hook-ups, and the Virgin Mary, can Jack come to the rescue?

Running time 50 minutes. Tickets £17.50 (Play only £12)
<https://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event/a-play-a-pie-a-pint-jack-spring-24>

Reviews of all these productions will appear on my [Must See Theatre Substack](#) subscribe free at liamrudden.substack.com and each review will be delivered straight to your inbox as it goes live.

Thanks for reading, until next month, happy theatre-going.

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