

WHAT'S ON

Canadian guitar genius in town

CANADIAN acoustic guitar maestro Erik Mongrain is at Poulton Community Hall on Breck Road tonight at 9pm. Erik Mongrain was born in Montreal on April 12, 1980 and when he was young, he was more into sports than music.

Growing up to the sounds of Metallica, Jimi Hendrix and mostly Kurt Cobain from Nirvana, Erik discovered an interest in guitar.

At 14, he received a classical guitar as a gift and learnt by ear his favourite songs. A year later, he bought his very first electric guitar which allowed him to learn and play Nirvana songs to his delight.



He learned guitar on his own, composed his own music and discovered Jean-Sebastian Bach's classical guitar melodies, which he learned by heart. Around the age of 18, he discovered Canadian guitar giant Don Ross. It was during this period in his life that Erik chose acoustic guitar as his favourite musical instrument.

He also experimented with a technique called "lap tapping." With the guitar on his lap, he tapped the chords as if it were a piano. People passing by on the streets were his first "fans."

Erik is constantly researching and exploring the world of music. For almost two years he has resumed standard guitar posture and has been writing songs.

● Tickets, £10 from (01253) 890927 or on the door.

Different class of comedian

Stand up comedy star Ed Byrne drops into Blackpool Grand Theatre tonight with his blisteringly funny one man show Different Class about marriage, class, the youth of today and anything else that strikes him as humorous.

Dublin-born Ed Byrne is a Perrier Award-nominated, stand up comedian and voice over artist.

He has presented numerous TV shows from Uncut! Best Unseen Ads to BBC2's Mock the Week and Just For Laughs, and is a regular guest on TV panel games.

Ed is an Edinburgh Festival Fringe favourite and has performed six sell-out shows at the Festival, and three sell-out tours across the UK.

He has also been warmly received abroad, performing to huge audiences in Canada, France, Australia, New Zealand and the US. Ed's chatty style of observational comedy and colourful anecdotes appeals to most audiences, occasionally veering off into innovative ideas and threads.

As an observational stand up comedian Ed Byrne is unrivalled. He has performed hit UK tours, solo runs at Dublin's Gaieity and

Ambassador Theatres and made his London West End debut in a two week run at The New Ambassadors Theatre.

For TV Ed appeared in a Father Ted Christmas Special as a 'grungy teenager', the ITV/LWT Christmas Day Panto, Aladdin, where he played Aladdin opposite Patsy Kensit. He was co-lead as Davina McCall's flatmate Alex in the ITV sitcom, Sam's Game. Following this he played the lead role of Barry Cassidy for RTE's The Cassidy's (six part sitcom). He has also featured in BBC's Doctors as Mickey Moran a wheeling, dealing duck and diver.

Ed has presented TV shows, including his own six part series Ed Byrne's Just For Laughs, and made sparkling appearances on Mock The Week, 8 Out Of 10 Cats, Never Mind the Buzzcocks, Graham Norton's Bigger Picture and Have I Got News For You. His theatre work has included the lead role in Kings Of The Road which played Edinburgh Festival for the full three week run in 2004 before transferring to Dublin's Ambassador's Theatre for three weeks after a short run at Greenwich Festival and Winchester Theatre Royal.

Last year Ed performed in Bermuda for Just



For Laughs, Rome, France, Switzerland and Ireland returning to the Edinburgh Festival with a brand new show for the full three week run at Assembly Halls, followed by a UK and Ireland tour including a five week residency at Riverside Studios London.

All tickets for tonight's show are £17.50 each. Call the Grand Theatre box office on (01253) 290190, online at www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk

Grand
theatre

Brighten Up

Winter Nights

LazyTown LIVE! The Pirate Adventure
Thursday 19 to Sunday 22 November
Hot on the heels of the phenomenally successful first ever LazyTown Live! comes a BRAND NEW SHOW
Tickets from £12.00

Viennese Romance

Monday 23 November
Enjoy a wonderful adventure through the music of Viennese composers.
Tickets from 14.00

Derek Acorah

Tuesday 24 November
Derek Acorah is undoubtedly the UK's No.1 Spirit Medium. The star of Most Haunted, Most Haunted Live and Paranormal Egypt.
Tickets from £16.00

Kate Rusby - Christmas Kate

Monday 07 December
Kate Rusby has become one of Britain's foremost music artists, whether performing songs from the country's rich music tradition or her own intuitive self-penned material.
Tickets £18.00

Beyond The Barricade At Christmas

Monday 14 December
Bringing you all the great songs and moments of the West End musicals, this is a brand new production featuring music from all the great shows and movies of the festive season.
Tickets £20.00

Christmas Concert With Carols

Monday 21 December
Performing at The Grand this year will be one of Poulton-le-Fylde Band's highlights of the Band's busy festive season.
Tickets £10.00

AND FINALLY DON'T FORGET THIS YEAR'S SPECTACULAR PANTO PETER PAN

Call 01253 290190

Online www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk

Light relief for Christmas

BLACKPOOL is set to become a hive of festive fun next Saturday as 2008 X-Factor finalist Laura White and hotly tipped rock act Mr Hudson flick the switch to launch the 2009 Christmas Illuminations.

The extravaganza will start from 2pm in St John's with a host of entertainment including street theatre, local artists and community groups, building up to the Christmas switch on at 4.30pm.

Rock FM are hosting the event and the radio station's Matt & Darren (Max & OB formerly of Hollyoaks fame), will be out there in full voice. The event will kick start the town's festive activities and Christmas shopping in the town centre at Houndshill Shopping Centre.



St John's will also boast a massive 40ft Christmas tree accompanied by the town's festive lights provided by the Illuminations department.

See Santa's reindeer, and say hello to this year's baby reindeer at Matcham's Court (to the rear of the Grand Theatre).

It's an early opportunity to give your Christmas wishes to Santa who will be sitting on his sleigh and keeping an eye on his reindeer.

From the end of November, St John's will be the coolest place to be as Blackpool will see its very own ice rink installed in the town centre, operating through until December 31. Skaters of all ages will be able to glide on real ice in front of the world famous Winter Gardens.

ROUND&ABOUT

A VISIT to the Friends of the **Grand Christmas Fair and Theatre Open Day** on Sunday at Blackpool Grand Theatre is a great way to get in the mood for the festive season. And it's free.

Pop into to the Grand from 11am to 4pm and enjoy stalls of Christmas goodies, pick up presents, have a sneaky peek inside Blackpool's Victorian theatre. You might see Father Christmas. The varied stalls offer many unusual gift ideas such as watercolours, soft bears, dolls-house furniture, jewellery, Polish amber and glass, wood turned items, toiletries and Christmas cards and decorations.

You can also browse through the fascinating theatre memorabilia, purchase old posters from shows which have appeared at the Grand or try your luck on the Tombola.

There will also be theatre tours to the hidden corners of Blackpool's most beautiful theatre - book as you arrive as they soon fill up. Home-made cakes and mince pies are available from the Friends of the Grand stall at the rear of the Dress Circle. It is on from 11am to 4pm.

● **The Dukes in Lancaster** is joining forces with one of the leading young people's theatre companies this Christmas to create a