News

SUTCo & SUPAS reveal Audition Dates

Sophie Layton (she/her)

The Sheffield University Theatre Company (SUTCo) and the Sheffield University Performing Arts Society (SUPAS) have announced their upcoming semester one production programmes, as well as audition dates for budding thespians looking for their next (for first!) on-stage role.

With five unique shows across the two society's programmes, there is a wide variety of student theatre available for new and returning students to engage with, as many new students prepare to grace Sheffield's stages.

SUTCo specialise in plays, with a mixed programme of original and classic scripts from their members, whilst SUPAS platform musicals that have histories in regional, West End and Broadway theatres, to let budding thespians live out their musical theatre dreams! The University of Sheffield Light Entertainment Society (USLES) have yet to announce their upcoming show, but this is expected shortly.

SUTCo's Your Heart's Too Open, Close It
Auditions:
Thursday September 26th
Friday September 27th
Callbacks:
Sunday September 29th

SUTCo's The Importance of Being Earnest
Auditions:
Thursday September 26th
Friday September 27th
Callbacks:
Sunday September 29th

SUPAS' Be More Chill
Auditions:
Tuesday October 1st
Wednesday October 2nd
Callbacks:
Friday October 4th

SUTCo's Margaret Beaufort: Kingmaker
Auditions:
Thursday September 26th
Friday September 27th
Callbacks:
Sunday September 29th

SUPAS' Amélie
Auditions:
Sunday October 6th
Monday October 7th
Callbacks:
Wednesday October 9th





Review

NOW That's What I Call a Musical

Touring Production

Sophie Layton (she/her)

Who remembers all of those old NOW That's What I Call Music albums from back in the day that must have reached the early 10,000s at this point? Well, just like those classic compilation albums, there's a new show in town with a jukebox score ready to get you out of your seats and transport you thirty years into the past. So bust out that old CD player, turn off the telly and get ready to dance to the latest musical to hit the Lyceum stage!

NOW That's What I Call a Musical takes us to 2009, and a school reunion where everyone is back in town. As Gemma begins to reminisce on the old days with her best friend April, strangely absent from the celebrations, we are taken back to 1989, with the old antics fresh in mind! As we explore Gemma and April's friendship and diverging dreams, we begin to see the cracks beginning to show in the friendship, and in the friends themselves. But when April makes a spectacular return from her antics in Hollywood, they may face their greatest challenge yet, with years of no communication leaving a lot left unsaid.

For a musical which has no basis in pre-existing formats, is clearly written as a love letter to the 80s and 90s and attempts to cover so much ground in such little time, this musical is quite a feat to say the least! Written by Pippa Evans and directed and choreographed by Craig Revel Horwood, NOW is a well-crafted, if occasionally tenuous, story about love, loss and friendship that can connect with anyone, no matter your age, experiences or points of view. The decision to play these two timelines, 1989 and 2009, side by side is creative genius, and watching the characters walking between them makes every story beat that much more satisfying.

The lighting, which is one of my favourite displays of the technical department I have ever seen, is designed by Ben Cracknell, and is simply wondrous to behold. LEDs integrated cleverly into set, fixtures descending from the fly gallery, and mixed colour palettes on different areas of the stage really helped to sell the story of the cast bathed in this glorious lighting.

Similarly, Tom Rogers and Toots Butcher's costuming array was spectacular on so many different levels. From Gemma's ugly metallic pink dress that is so vulgar on the eyes I want it myself, to the sparkling ensemble dance outfits, the uniforms past Gemma and April wear, and even the stripping pizza guy's tiny number were all exquisitely fabulous, and if the security at Sheffield Theatres would not have stopped me, would be overflowing my wardrobe by now!

For stand-out performances, Nikita Johal as Younger Gemma steals the show. Her portrayal is candid but brilliant as a girl living often in her friend's shadow, but with a fierce story of her own to tell. The way she engages with every performer brings the audience with her, until you are hanging off of her every word, lyric, and movement!

Similarly, Maia Hawkins as Young April completes this musical's dynamic duo and what a team they form together. Hawkins' vocals are simply unmatched in this cast, and her ability to hit those particularly challenging notes blows audiences away on multiple occasions. However, the inclusion of Sinitta, who performs one song, steals a RuPaul classic line and then leaves is not needed in this show. At all. Any random celebrity could have performed the role she did, with the same uncessary effect.

NOW That's What I Call a Musical is so much fun, and I guarantee you will have a fantastic evening seeing this incredible performance. Every element comes together so beautifully to create a near-seamless production filled with emotion, side-splitting comedy and some of the best songs from the 80s and 90s to top it all off!

Rating: ★★★★☆

NOW That's What I Call a Musical is touring the U.K. until April 12th 2025