



MUSICALS & MORE... REPTON SHOOK!

By Alana Wadkin. Photo by Sue Wilde

It was a lovely day; the sun came out and shone... This was my second time at a Michael open air concert and I absolutely loved it. I took my mum, dad and younger cousin Maura, who hadn't seen Michael live before. I met several other fans and Maureen and Gill, which was really lovely. We weren't impressed at the way the actual event was arranged – we queued up for ages like everybody else then a gang of people pushed to the front of the queue and after we got in, my dad had to push my wheelchair a long distance just to get on to the grass. Luckily my mum and cousin went ahead to find us a place near the stage. The designated area for disabled was a long way from the stage so we decided to go on the grass.

I actually liked the supporting act; they were good – really nice voices. Coming to the actual concert, before Michael was due to come on – I happened to look around and

there was Michael coming out of a building, smiling and waving. The overture started and Michael walked on stage to rapturous applause and screaming. Michael was wearing a cream suit, very smart! The first thing he said was "come down here", within a minute all around the stage was packed with people then Michael added "that's better I can see you now." Michael spotted me (sung out my name) and acknowledged me throughout the concert waving and giving gorgeous smiles. My cousin couldn't believe Michael recognised me. I was delighted and amazed! For the first half I had a restricted view with people standing. In the interval we moved near the stage to see better...

The concert was fantastic, mostly dedicated to the musicals with several up-tempo songs included. Michael was fabulous and his voice seemed a lot stronger and more powerful! The special

guests were John Owen Jones, Michael McCarthy, Celia Graham and Emma Williams. The opening song was 'This Is The Moment', a very significant and special song to me. Then Michael sang 'I'm Feeling Good' and 'Do You Mind', which I really enjoyed because it reminded me of the tour. Michael talked about the most debated beard and said he is shaving it off after *Kismet*. This was followed by 'Stranger In Paradise' paired with 'And This Is My Beloved', both of which were sung beautifully. I think Michael then sang 'Phantom Of The Opera' and 'All I Ask Of You' with Celia Graham. They too were sung amazingly. On to the *Les Miserables* medley, one of my highlights. It was brilliant and included all of the special guests – outstanding voices. All of the songs were sung with passion but my favourite was 'Empty Chairs, Empty Tables' and everybody loved 'One Day More' judging by the audience's response. In the interval, I asked my cousin

what did she think of the concert – she actually liked it and thought Michael worked hard. This surprised me because she isn't into this kind of music normally!

The second half I really enjoyed, I had a better view (still trying to see past people's heads though) - Michael walked back on to the stage wearing a black suit. 'Oh What A Circus' was the first song, Michael's performance of it was fantastic and he seemed at ease. I was glad to hear 'High Flying Adored' next because at the Manchester concert it wasn't performed and I think the lyrics are so beautiful. Michael sang a *West Side Story* medley with all of his special guests, which was well received by the audience.

Another highlight was Michael's duet with Emma Williams; they sang a breathtaking version of 'The Prayer'. Michael then sang 'Tell Me It's Not True' and 'The Show Must Go On', which I love. 'Crazy' was also a firm favourite with the audience, everybody was up dancing and this was the start of party time... I was in my element dancing and screaming! 'Don't Stop Me Now' was next to be given the Ball treatment, followed by 'Since You've Been Gone'. 'I Don't Feel Like Dancing' was also a crowd pleaser – another highlight! It was sung magnificently and how can you forget the dance moves! Michael said his thanks and goodbyes then walked off the stage to deafening cheering and clapping (cue the encore). Michael returned to sing 'Love Changes Everything' and told everybody to sing along. The special guests sang the last part with Michael.

After another encore – they sung 'Do You Hear The People Sing', which was just amazing. What a wonderful concert!!