

Drum roll please... theatre stars take centre stage

By Gabriella Payne

After the 2020 Covid lockdowns saw the performing arts sector take a hit, theatres around the state are thrilled to be bursting back to life - and Dandenong's Drum Theatre is no exception, with the first shows of the season just around the corner.

Two of Australia's most loved musical theatre stars, Michael Cormick and Rachael Beck, will be taking to the stage on Tuesday 16 February for a fabulous night of entertainment in their highly anticipated show 'You and I'.

Mr Cormick and Ms Beck are both renowned stars of the theatre, having been close friends and lighting up stages together for over 25 years now.

The pair initially met whilst playing the leading roles in a performance of 'Beauty and the Beast' over two decades ago and Mr Cormick said he was thrilled to be once again taking to the stage with his dear friend.

"It's going to be amazing, I just can't wait," Mr Cormick said.

"We've missed what we do so much and it's going to be so exciting to get back on stage - especially with my partner in crime, Rachael."

Ms Beck shared her co-star's feelings, agreeing that it was extremely exciting to be seeing the revival of the arts and entertainment sector in Victoria.

"It's been a very tough time for artists across the board, so it's really wonderful that we can finally do what we do and help bring some smiles to people's faces," Ms Beck said.

'You and I' is set to be a performance like no other, being described as "like watching 10 musicals in one night", where Mr Cormick and Ms Beck will be sharing stories, songs and snippets from their favourite musicals - a night sure to be bursting with entertainment.

Ms Beck described the show as a "New York cabaret" style performance and said that it covered "a good mix of everything", with songs and scenes from hit musicals such as *Les Miserables*, *Beauty and the Beast*

and the *Phantom of the Opera* to name a few.

Mr Cormick added that it was a "celebration of our careers together" and said that having the opportunity to perform with Ms Beck, his good friend, was like "putting on a pair of comfortable shoes".

"We vocally perform together so beautifully, but there's that kind of connection together on stage which the audience will feel," Mr Cormick said.

Being born and raised in the Doveton and Dandenong areas, Mr Cormick is excited to be coming back to the Drum Theatre, to perform for the local community and said he could "never forget" where he came from.

"All of it will be a bit like coming home, in more ways than one," he said.

Mr Cormick said that the Melbourne lockdowns had been incredibly hard for the abundance of performers this city is home to, and he had missed entertaining and interacting with live audiences.

"As performers, we realise that defines who we are - so to not have the ability to do that, to not have the exchange with the audience is what I've missed the most," Mr Cormick said.

Both Ms Beck and Mr Cormick will be touring with 'You and I' around regional Victoria, with approximately 20 dates booked in for the coming weeks.

Having been postponed and cancelled by the pandemic a few times already, Ms Beck said herself and the team had "all our fingers crossed" that nothing would stop the show this time.

"It's going to be a great tour with stories, songs and a few laughs too," she said.

The show will be playing at the Drum Theatre on Tuesday 16 February at 7.30pm and tickets are available at <https://drum.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au> or via the box office, on 8571 1666.

For more information about 'You and I', all Covid-safe practices in place and other upcoming performances at the theatre, visit the Drum website.



Michael Cormick and Rachael Beck are looking forward to performing on stage together once again.
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