# Michael Burdett revisits the unglamorous beginnings of Wham! in Brighton show



### Discovering Wham!: A Journey into Musical History

Brighton will soon host a unique theatrical experience that promises nostalgia and comic insight into the early days of one of pop music's most celebrated duos. "Before Fame (or: What Not to Do When You Discover One of the World's Greatest Pop Duos in a Village Hall)" is set to be performed at The Old Market in Hove on May 25, showcasing the talents of Michael Burdett, who played a pivotal role in the nascent phases of George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley’s careers.

In 1979, Burdett, then a passionate music enthusiast, discovered the two teenagers while they were part of a ska band known as The Executive. He brought them into a recording studio, hoping to secure a record deal that ultimately eluded them. This initial encounter laid the groundwork for a reflective narrative that captures the essence of ambition, aspiration, and the harsh realities often faced by emerging artists.

The show delves deep into George and Andrew's early musical ambitions, marked by record company rejections and the budding signs of George's prodigious talent. It explores the hopes and dreams intertwined with the trials of the music industry, offering an intimate view of the moments that shaped their future as Wham!. Critics have described the performance as "quirky, funny, and uplifting," highlighting its ability to blend humour with poignant storytelling.

Trialled at the Edinburgh Fringe, the production has already garnered acclaim, with Dominic Cavendish of The Telegraph noting, “Loved Michael Burdett Before Fame, reminiscing about the time before Wham!, and a window on a vanished late 70s and early 80s world.” This suggests that the show not only resonates with those familiar with the music of that era but also appeals to a modern audience seeking a connection to past musical icons.

The performance also carries a philanthropic aspect, as it supports Nordoff & Robbins, a UK music therapy charity. This connection amplifies the cultural significance of the project, demonstrating how music can transcend mere entertainment to bring about social good. As audiences gather to witness this blend of storytelling and comedy, they will also partake in an initiative that harnesses the healing power of music.

Moreover, the Brighton Fringe, known for its vibrant arts scene, serves as an appropriate backdrop for this reflection on the evolution of pop music. The festival not only showcases established acts but also provides a platform for emerging talents and stories that illuminate the often-overlooked journeys within the creative industry.

As ticket sales gain momentum, theatre-goers can anticipate an evening that pays homage to the legacy of Wham! and the rich tapestry of their formative years. Burdett's performance promises to be more than just a recount of events; it is a celebration of dreams, resilience, and the unpredictable journey of discovering musical greatness.

In a time where nostalgia is a powerful cultural force, Burdett's show stands out as a reminder of the trials and triumphs of young musicians. Those who attend are likely to leave with not only a deeper appreciation for Wham!'s rise to fame but also a renewed perspective on the musical landscape that continues to evolve, shaped by both visible icons and unseen heroes of the industry.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25146760.brighton-welcome-new-show-early-days-wham/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.theoldmarket.com/shows/before-fame)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25146760.brighton-welcome-new-show-early-days-wham/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://www.visitbrighton.com/whats-on/before-fame-or-what-not-to-do-when-you-discover-one-of-the-worlds-greatest-pop-duos-in-a-village-hall-p2531181)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25146760.brighton-welcome-new-show-early-days-wham/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.comedy.co.uk/fringe/2024/michael-burdett/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25146760.brighton-welcome-new-show-early-days-wham/?ref=rss), [[5]](https://broadwaybaby.com/article/the-brighton-fringe-marketing-guide/1569)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25146760.brighton-welcome-new-show-early-days-wham/?ref=rss), [[6]](https://broadwaybaby.com/shows/before-fame/811878)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25146760.brighton-welcome-new-show-early-days-wham/?ref=rss), [[7]](https://www.chortle.co.uk/shows/edinburgh_fringe_2024/m/36025/_michael_burdett%3A_before_fame)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25146760.brighton-welcome-new-show-early-days-wham/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theoldmarket.com/shows/before-fame> - 'Before Fame - OR: What not to do when you discover one of the world's greatest pop duos in a village hall' is a solo show by Michael Burdett, scheduled for Sunday, May 25, 2025, at The Old Market in Hove. The performance delves into Burdett's experience discovering George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley in 1979, when they were part of a ska band called The Executive. Burdett attempted to secure a record deal for them, but faced rejections. The show offers insights into George and Andrew's early musical ambitions before they formed Wham!, highlighting record company rejections and the emergence of George's talent. Described as 'quirky, funny, and uplifting,' the show was trialled at the previous year's Edinburgh Fringe, where The Times listed it as one of the funniest shows of the year. The performance supports Nordoff & Robbins, the UK's music therapy charity. Dominic Cavendish from The Telegraph praised the show, stating, 'Loved Michael Burdett, Before Fame, reminiscing about the time before Wham!, and a window on a vanished late 70s and early 80s world.' ([theoldmarket.com](https://www.theoldmarket.com/shows/before-fame?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.visitbrighton.com/whats-on/before-fame-or-what-not-to-do-when-you-discover-one-of-the-worlds-greatest-pop-duos-in-a-village-hall-p2531181> - 'Before Fame - OR: What not to do when you discover one of the world's greatest pop duos in a village hall' is a theatre performance by Michael Burdett, taking place on Sunday, May 25, 2025, at The Old Market in Hove. The show explores Burdett's discovery of George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley in 1979, when they were part of a ska band called The Executive. Burdett's efforts to secure a record deal for them were unsuccessful. The performance provides a glimpse into George and Andrew's early musical ambitions before they formed Wham!, including their experiences with record company rejections and the initial signs of George's talent. Described as 'quirky, funny, and uplifting,' the show was trialled at the previous year's Edinburgh Fringe, where The Times listed it as one of the funniest shows of the year. The performance supports Nordoff & Robbins, the UK's music therapy charity. Dominic Cavendish from The Telegraph praised the show, stating, 'Loved Michael Burdett, Before Fame, reminiscing about the time before Wham!, and a window on a vanished late 70s and early 80s world.' ([visitbrighton.com](https://www.visitbrighton.com/whats-on/before-fame-or-what-not-to-do-when-you-discover-one-of-the-worlds-greatest-pop-duos-in-a-village-hall-p2531181?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.comedy.co.uk/fringe/2024/michael-burdett/> - 'Michael Burdett: Before Fame' is a spoken word comedy show that premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2024. The performance delves into Burdett's experience discovering George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley in 1979, when they were part of a ska band called The Executive. Burdett attempted to secure a record deal for them, but faced rejections. The show offers insights into George and Andrew's early musical ambitions before they formed Wham!, highlighting record company rejections and the emergence of George's talent. Described as 'quirky, funny, and uplifting,' the show was trialled at the previous year's Edinburgh Fringe, where The Times listed it as one of the funniest shows of the year. The performance supports Nordoff & Robbins, the UK's music therapy charity. Dominic Cavendish from The Telegraph praised the show, stating, 'Loved Michael Burdett, Before Fame, reminiscing about the time before Wham!, and a window on a vanished late 70s and early 80s world.' ([comedy.co.uk](https://www.comedy.co.uk/fringe/2024/michael-burdett/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://broadwaybaby.com/article/the-brighton-fringe-marketing-guide/1569> - The Brighton Fringe Marketing Guide, authored by Pete Shaw, offers insights into effectively marketing a show at the Brighton Fringe. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the target audience and strategically allocating marketing resources to ensure a return on investment. The guide discusses the significance of advertising in publications that align with the show's audience and suggests supporting media that cover the Fringe. It also highlights the role of social media in engaging potential attendees and the necessity of consistent branding across all promotional materials. Additionally, the guide provides practical advice on flyering, postering, and other promotional activities to enhance visibility and attract audiences. ([broadwaybaby.com](https://broadwaybaby.com/article/the-brighton-fringe-marketing-guide/1569?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://broadwaybaby.com/shows/before-fame/811878> - 'Before Fame - OR: What not to do when you discover one of the world's greatest pop duos in a village hall' is a theatre performance by Michael Burdett, taking place on Sunday, May 25, 2025, at The Old Market in Hove. The show explores Burdett's discovery of George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley in 1979, when they were part of a ska band called The Executive. Burdett's efforts to secure a record deal for them were unsuccessful. The performance provides a glimpse into George and Andrew's early musical ambitions before they formed Wham!, including their experiences with record company rejections and the initial signs of George's talent. Described as 'quirky, funny, and uplifting,' the show was trialled at the previous year's Edinburgh Fringe, where The Times listed it as one of the funniest shows of the year. The performance supports Nordoff & Robbins, the UK's music therapy charity. Dominic Cavendish from The Telegraph praised the show, stating, 'Loved Michael Burdett, Before Fame, reminiscing about the time before Wham!, and a window on a vanished late 70s and early 80s world.' ([broadwaybaby.com](https://broadwaybaby.com/shows/before-fame/811878?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.chortle.co.uk/shows/edinburgh_fringe_2024/m/36025/_michael_burdett%3A_before_fame> - 'Michael Burdett: Before Fame' is a spoken word comedy show that premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2024. The performance delves into Burdett's experience discovering George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley in 1979, when they were part of a ska band called The Executive. Burdett attempted to secure a record deal for them, but faced rejections. The show offers insights into George and Andrew's early musical ambitions before they formed Wham!, highlighting record company rejections and the emergence of George's talent. Described as 'quirky, funny, and uplifting,' the show was trialled at the previous year's Edinburgh Fringe, where The Times listed it as one of the funniest shows of the year. The performance supports Nordoff & Robbins, the UK's music therapy charity. Dominic Cavendish from The Telegraph praised the show, stating, 'Loved Michael Burdett, Before Fame, reminiscing about the time before Wham!, and a window on a vanished late 70s and early 80s world.' ([chortle.co.uk](https://www.chortle.co.uk/shows/edinburgh_fringe_2024/m/36025/_michael_burdett%3A_before_fame?utm_source=openai))