# Jonny & The Baptists explore mental health and Tory mismanagement in new show at Oxford



Jonny Donahoe and Paddy Gervers, the dynamic duo known as Jonny & The Baptists, are set to bring their latest production, *The Happiness Index*, to Oxford’s Old Fire Station on May 22 and 23. This innovative show promises to delve into the intricate connections between personal tragedy, governmental austerity, and mental health, casting a critical eye on the socio-political landscape that has been marred by years of mismanagement and neglect under Conservative leadership.

Inspired by the misguided attempts to quantify national happiness during the Conservative era, *The Happiness Index* is a meticulous exploration crafted in collaboration with the acclaimed theatre-maker James Rowland. The performance is structured around five acts, each reflecting the impact of one of the five Conservative Prime Ministers to hold office when the country desperately needed vision and effective leadership. This format allows the duo to weave together personal narratives and broader political commentary, providing enlightening insights into how failed policies resonate deeply on an individual level.

The show not only critiques disastrous political decisions but also intimately connects with themes of mental health, grief, and resilience. Both performers draw deeply from their personal experiences; Gervers, in particular, has shared his ongoing battle with clinical depression, while Donahoe speaks candidly about living with ADHD. Their vulnerability is a cornerstone of the narrative, allowing audiences to engage with material that reflects the very real toll of neglectful governance on mental well-being. They convey a sense of hope and connection amidst the often grim realities, suggesting that humor can be a powerful antidote to the adversity bred by poor political choices.

Interestingly, this tour marks a significant departure from Jonny & The Baptists’ usual format. For the first time, the duo will not be playing musical instruments due to Gervers' recent arm surgery, offering a new dimension to their performance. This change is complemented by the introduction of a fully realized set and lighting design, aiming to elevate the theatrical experience. As they embark on this journey, the duo expressed their enthusiasm to present a show that they believe resonates with many, particularly during a time when political ineptitude has left the nation yearning for genuine connection and inspiration.

Critics have already begun to weigh in on the show after its Edinburgh Fringe debut, praising the duo's unique blend of musical comedy and sharp political satire. Reviews highlight both the humor and emotional depth, noting how the duo's interactions create an inviting atmosphere even when tackling issues that are heavy due to the stain of recent governmental policies. One review suggests that if there were a prescription for lifting the nation’s spirits, it would certainly feature the comedic talents of Jonny & The Baptists—especially pertinent in an age where the effectiveness of Labour's governance will be critically tested.

As they prepare to hit the road, touring cities across the UK until June 2025, their blend of wit, social commentary, and genuine warmth promises to not only entertain but also provoke crucial discourse among audience members. The duo’s commitment to exploring complex themes through laughter underscores a belief that joy can coexist with sorrow—a powerful message in today’s climate, where alternative perspectives are more vital than ever.

This performance is likely to be a compelling experience for theatre-goers, offering both entertainment and a necessary reflection on contemporary challenges related to happiness, politics, and mental health—reminding us that while hope may flourish, vigilance remains essential in holding our leaders accountable.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25150969.musical-comedy-duo-brining-edinburgh-fringe-show-oxford/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.comedy.co.uk/live/shows/1556/jonny-the-baptists-the-happiness-index/> - Jonny & The Baptists, comprising Jonny Donahoe and Paddy Gervers, are set to perform 'The Happiness Index' on a UK tour from February to June 2025. The show delves into themes of personal tragedy, government austerity, and mental health, critiquing 14 years of Conservative rule and its impact on society. Structured around five acts, each reflecting the tenure of a different Prime Minister, the performance also draws from the duo's personal experiences, including Gervers' ongoing struggle with depression. Notably, this tour marks the first time they will not play musical instruments on stage due to Gervers' arm surgery in April 2025. The show will feature a real set and lighting design, enhancing its theatricality. The duo expressed excitement about sharing this meaningful work with audiences across the UK.
3. <https://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/feature/19321/jonny-and-the-baptists-the-happiness-index-ten-thankless-years> - A review of Jonny & The Baptists' 'The Happiness Index' highlights the duo's impressive blend of musical talent and comedic chemistry. The performance is noted for its euphonious anthemic songs and consistently hilarious banter, enhanced by playful ideas and interpretive dance. The second half of the show, 'Ten Thankless Years,' is described as looser, with delightful routines and surprises, including a James Acaster impression and highbrow humor. While the show doesn't provide a definitive answer to achieving happiness amidst national challenges, it leaves audiences smiling and reimagining familiar songs.
4. <https://www.jonnyandthebaptists.co.uk/live> - Jonny & The Baptists are touring 'The Happiness Index' and 'Ten Thankless Years' across the UK in 2025. The double bill features a new hour of songs and stories about happiness and a retrospective of their first decade of work. The tour includes performances in various cities, with dates and venues listed on their official website. The duo's unique blend of musical comedy and political satire continues to resonate with audiences nationwide.
5. <https://www.chortle.co.uk/review/2024/08/06/56239/jonny_and_the_baptists%3A_the_happiness_index> - A review of Jonny & The Baptists' 'The Happiness Index' at the Edinburgh Fringe praises the duo's satirical take on national unhappiness, focusing on the last five Conservative Prime Ministers. The show delves into personal experiences with mental health, highlighting Donahoe's ADHD and Gervers' severe, grief-induced clinical depression. The performance juxtaposes serious themes with broad smiles and toe-tapping music, emphasizing the duo's friendship as a source of healing. The review concludes that if anyone were serious about raising the nation's Happiness Index, Jonny & The Baptists would be available on prescription.
6. <https://thelowry.com/whats-on/jonny-the-baptists-the-happiness-index-ten-thankless-years/> - Jonny & The Baptists presented a double bill of 'The Happiness Index' and 'Ten Thankless Years' at The Lowry in March 2025. The performances combined a new hour of songs and stories about happiness with a retrospective of their first decade of work. The shows received critical acclaim, with reviews describing them as 'an hour of glorious chaos' and 'a proper belly-laugh show.' The duo's unique blend of musical comedy and political satire continues to resonate with audiences.
7. <https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/arts-and-culture/laughter-politics-and-the-struggle-for-happiness-jonny-the-baptists-the-happiness-index-tour-brings-wit-and-wisdom-to-edinburgh-5022186> - An article discusses Jonny & The Baptists' 'The Happiness Index' tour, highlighting how the show blends humor, politics, and personal struggles with mental health. The duo reflects on the show's emotional depth and the importance of laughter in navigating today's chaotic world. They share insights into the development of the show, emphasizing its personal and political themes. The article underscores the duo's commitment to exploring complex subjects through comedy and their desire to connect with audiences on a deeper level.