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It's the answer to our prayers - live music in a church

FOR many, Emmanuel Church in Billericay is a place to worship, sing hymns and listen to Paul A Carr's

For others it's a chance to put on

years, Paul has promoted live music folk, blues and rock. - and theatre - in his church in Lain-Team Ministry.

And he's had some chart-topping rockers Deacon Blue.

farne Story featuring Ray Laidlaw month." and Billy Mitchell from Lindisfarne.

smaller events in his garden and even in his lounge at home.

And the rocking reverend doesn't make a penny from his live music and it was right," he said. promotions, instead choosing to "After the Fire played here. They give away all proceeds to charity.

music," he explained. "I was a brass background. when I was younger, so music always music. I like secular music, I played a big part in my life.

"I'd spend a lot of money on gigs take the plunge. and I've got a vast record collection but a few years ago I thought 'I won- interestingly, der if I could ask this person to come that if I go to a gig I [and play] and would they come?' always listen to

"And secondly would I have the support artist. enough people interested to cover "Most people my costs?

"I did a few events in my last until the big guy church in East London but when I comes on but I came here, Emmanuel Church is a always listen to the fabulous venue - it's theatre style, it's support artist because tiered, the acoustics are great, I've tomorrow they could be got a great garden which can be used the big stars. lot, from just having the odd one or to ask them. two events to having something hopefully that would be quite signif-

house gigs where I have around 35 'hey mate, that was great, will you and gig goers alike. people round in my lounge and then come and play in Billericay in my about 150-250 people in my garden garden?' He said 'yeah' and gave me for different events so when what his email.

PLACE OF WORSHIP IN BILLERICAY DOUBLES UP AS A GIG VENUE THANKS TO THE ROCKING REVEREND

was successful, you ask somebody again and ask somebody else.

"The music industry in many their gig gear, enjoy an evening of ways is quite small and my speciallive music and sup a pint of local ale. ism, if you want to call it that, is That's because for the last 13 or so. Americana, which is a mixture of

"I'm a member of the Americana don Road, where he is Team Rector UK Association and I'm registered for the Billericay and Little Burstead with them as a promoter, and they all know each other.

"We have a kind of reputation that names on stage too, including Ricky we give good hospitality, we look Ross, lead singer of legendary pop after them, we attract a good audience, so it sort of snowballed over Ross will be back later this year the years from one or two events a and he's also lined up The Lindis- year into, pre-lockdown, an event a

Paul's first foray into live music What's more, he also puts on promotion was a show by Christian singer-songwriter Brvn Haworth.

"It was a safe one because it was a Christian coming to play in a church

were a bit of a step-over because "I've always had an interest in they are secular but with a Christian

bander for many years, I played bass "So I evolved. I thought all the guitar in a band. Lused to do discos music. I listen to isn't Christian go to gigs. So I started to

"But what I did,

stay in the bar

- so it changed the dynamics quite a "So if I really enjoyed them, I used

"I remember a guy called Robert have been so successful is because show nights - but the church is trust-called the Purple Community Fund. Vincent. In about 2014 I saw him he's so passionate about them. icant. And I've been doing it for 13 or supporting Paul Carrack in South-





Some people play football, some people play golf, I go to gigs and put on gigs.

The Revd Paul

The Old Grey Whistle Test, Bob Harris became a real big fan of his and promoted him and he became mega."

awards.

40th anniversary of

It's not about booking any old building. band to make a fast buck, it's about "I have events in my church, I have "I spoke to him in the break - I said an enjoyable experience for artists booking artists who will respect their they support families that live on the

"I only book artists who I believe in." he said.

"Part of it is that you can't pro- said.

he's got two UK when I say to Ricky Ross 'the first CD A mericana I bought was Raintown [by Deacon think people trust me with that." he Bluel in 1988, I've got all your two songs on the know it's passionate.

"I'm a fan promoting rather than a about that at all." All shows are promoting indepen-

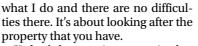
dently by himself and not the church ing and happy for him to use the

surroundings.

many ways with what we do," he live in shanties and shacks.

And he's also committed to only batical for a month and basically "We're kind of autonomous in and who survive by scavenging and

was a very small idea 'I wonder if...?' "I had him in and a few years later mote something half-heartedly so "Obviously the church is aware of they're the loveliest of people.



"I don't have artists come in that would be foul-mouthed or if their songs would be inappropriate. I've not booked artists because of that.

"I'm a great fan of a guv called Sam Outlaw who's an American Americana artist. "I've seen him a few times and I'm

seeing him again in a few weeks at the Omeara and I had the chance to book him a few years ago. "But he swears like a trooper and

he drinks out of a bottle of rosé when he plays - in fact he drinks two or three bottles of rosé.

"I love him but his music is not what you want in a church building.

"There are one or two churches now in Hackney and other places which are being used as venues and the artists show no respect for the

"So sometimes it's about protect ing the integrity of the building and I

Paul has never had trouble selling played the last albums' he gets it. People get it. They enough tickets and all profits are passed on to good causes.

"All the proceeds go to charity," he promoter in it for money - it's not said. "I've given away about £7-8,000, if not more over the last 10 years and a bit.

"There's one charity I'm particu-Part of the reason Paul's live shows - so he happily pays a rental fee on larly supporting at the moment

"They're based in the Philippines. I went there a few years ago on sablargest rubbish dump in the world

"It's the most amazing poverty, yet



"We support them as a church church events. anyway through what we call our "We've got a 24-channel PA desk Mission Giving but I have chosen which pretty much covers every- He's been a good buddy to do it with I'm not just tinpot guy with a rickety last few years because I know the worship band there pre-lockdown, him, I'll be honest." work they do, I know people on the so it was already in and pre-lockground.

play football, some people play golf, own PA. I go to gigs and put on gigs."

Billericay Brewery will run a bar ing. The church is 30 years old this sible standard. for the gigs in the church and pro- year, so fairly modern, and I think vide drinks for the garden and house when it was being put together they threshold of a church unless it's a teen I would never go to Newcastle concerts - again with any proceeds had the imagination to think this wedding or a funeral or something," to drink." going into the charity pot.

300 paying guests and all the necessary equipment is in place as it's and PA, and a friend of mine, Rich- The idea that God is ready to pounce! in Billericay so I suppose it's neutral already used for more traditional ard Shipton, is my PA guy

down it would be used regularly.

"Most promoters can take 20 per "No one has never said it isn't adecent off for arrangement fees and quate. In fact Ricky Ross's sound set foot inside a holy building. what have you but I don't do that. I engineer said 'it's amazing' - he was give it away. It's a hobby for me. I do very taken by it. They thought they the church, but that's not the pri- book a band from Newcastle to play it in my spare time - some people were going to have to bring their mary reason for Paul's live music for him!

"And the lighting is theatre lightcould be a community theatre or a he said. The church has a capacity for place where events could take place.

"He helped set up the PA at church people. years ago so he knows how it works.

them as my main charity over the thing," explained Paul. "We had a and I couldn't have done it without church hall. When you're in touch Using the church as a live music had some good artists there' you can

venue means many of those who obviously do it." pass through the doors don't usually So it's getting more people inside block might have been trying to

promotions. He does it as a hobby and wants to do it to the highest pos-

"A lot of people never go over the he said. "When I was growing up as a

"People often joke 'if I come into Sunderland to have a Newcastle "So we've got full stage lighting the church, will I get struck down?' band playing," he added, "but we're

"I often say 'well you're in and ground!"

Stadium in 2019, will headline the Revd Paul A Carr's annual Gig in the Garden this summer.

back garden

The 22-year-old blues artist hails from Billericay and was the 2020 and 2021 UK Blues Awards.

The show takes place in the Rectory Garden on Sunday, July 17 and will be the 11th staging of Gig in the Garden.

Also on the bill are two other own Genevieve Johnson.

Because of the unpredictable nature of the British climate, there's always a Plan B - so the show will take place inside the church if the weather is bad.

The next scheduled indoor show at Emmanuel Church is The Lindisfarne Story on Wednesday

"You could say it gets people over will celebrate the 50th the threshold, which is a good aspect of it - but I think it's just having fun, with songs and stories from "What I try to do with the events throughout Lindisfarne's long career

Deacon Blue singer and on his Short Stories Volume 2 "Usually I have no problem selling out. When Ricky Ross came a few

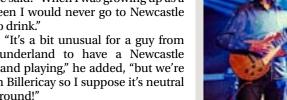
sell out. I could have sold another night but they wouldn't do it. "But interestingly then and now, been regular visitors to the I'm the only independent promoter

"It was the same with Beth Nielsen Chapman when she came and that says something about the reputation Great Expectations on Sunday, I have developed. That counts for April 3.

something when you're asking for from Billericay station and there "Even for Lindisfarne - I could say is parking for about 70 cars on site - additional parking can be found on the High Street and with Ray and he says 'wow, you've behind Iceland, which is only a

But he joked that being born and at Emmanuel Church, visit bred in Sunderland, one stumbling

Tickets for all events are available from www.wegottickets "Historically, going back to the



From Wembley Stadium to the reverend's

Guests enjoy one

Ricky Ross performs

- F

at Emmanuel Church, Billericay

1600s, there's always been a bit of

animosity [between the two cities],"

you're still alive!'

garden gigs

RISING star Connor Selby, who supported The Who at Wemblev

voted Young Artist of the Year in

up-and-coming stars, Joe Slater from Liverpool, plus Billericay's

Ray Laidlaw and Billy Mitchell anniversary of the band's chart topping album Fog on the Tyne

songwriter Ricky Ross heads off tour later this year and will pay another visit when he brings the show to Emmanuel on Tuesday, October 11.

Vibrant and anarchic theatre company The Pantaloons have church over the years and they too are coming back.

They perform their own twist on Charles Dickens' masterpiece

Emmanuel is a 10-minute walk five-minute walk away.

For more details about events revpacman.com