

Preview: Huge, Grand Opera House, York, January 26 and February 2

By Charles Hutchinson »

VERY few tickets remain for Huge's traditional double dose of winter blues-beating entertainment at the Grand Opera House, York, on January 26 and February 2.

Formed in 1990, the York party band, featuring Big Ian Donaghy, first played the York theatre in 1993 and now return there with a more diverse set than ever.



"In a land of dreadful tribute acts, Huge resisted, " says Big Ian.

"We chose not to come out with the soul-band set that always does the rounds, and instead we have the most bizarre set list, stretching from swing to reggae and Ska to rock'n'roll.

"The show now includes Amy Winehouse, Michael Bublé, The Who, Queen, Elton John, The Beatles, Take That, Robbie Williams, James Brown, The Jam and Stevie Wonder songs, as well as some Motown and disco."

Huge have a simple aim. "We want to give people a great night where they become a part of the show, " says Big Ian. "As 'brassheavy fromagiers and purveyors of funky cheesy tunes', we put credibility into quarantine to get audiences on their feet and we play every gig as if it's our last."

Huge have performed gigs with 2007 Strictly Come Dancing champion Alesha Dickson, Girls Aloud, Fun Lovin' Criminals and even the legendary Rolf Harris, and had the likes of Bill Nighy, Tim Rice and Coronation Street and Emmerdale stars dancing.

What will be on the cards for Huge fans at the Opera House?

"Wait and see, but our past gigs there have included special guests on video such as Tara Palmer Tomkinson, who recorded a promo from I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here; Harry Gration at Look North; and Theatre Royal panto dame Mr Kaler: Berwick is the man to look up to in this city, " says Big Ian.

"Last year we had a recorded performance of me doing a duet of James Brown's I Got You with Justin Timberlake in front of Cameron Diaz and Drew Barrymore."

Led by Big Ian, who by day teaches at The Mount and Danesgate Pupil Referral Unit, Huge will feature a horn section that includes Dave Kemp, formerly of Chris Rea's band and Scarborough's The Little Angels, and George Hall, "musical genius and butt of Ian's gags".