

MADNESS

Say hello to the Nutty Boys

October 6



British ska band Madness got their first taste of fame almost 40 years ago when, just teenagers, their song *One Step Beyond* reached the UK Top 10. Led by frontman Suggs, the lads then dominated the charts through the '80s dishing out hit anthems including *Our*

House, It Must Be Love and *Baggy Trousers*. In fact, Madness clocked up 214 weeks in the UK singles charts in a decade with 15 singles reaching the UK Top 10.

After successful reunion gigs in the '90s and early noughties, the musical *Our House*, based on a selection of Madness songs, was staged at Cambridge Theatre in

2002, winning the Laurence Olivier Award For Best New Musical in 2003. The band then returned with a new record in 2012 and a follow-up album in October entitled *Can't Touch Us Now*.

You can expect a smattering of new tracks and old favourites when they perform at the Irish Village this month.



a. Early days b. The band messing around backstage, 1980s c. The 1980s d. 1982 e. One Step Beyond released in 1979



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



TEN MINUTES WITH...

Madness frontman Graham 'Suggs' McPherson

How old were you when joined Madness?

I was about 17, I think. I went to The Roxy club in Covent Garden when I was 16 and I remember there was a band who were 14 years old and I thought, 'If these guys can do it then why can't I?' By the time I was 18 I was on *Top Of The Pops*. We were kids, really. **How have things changed for young musicians starting out now?**

It's more difficult for bands now. When we were starting out in Camden Town there were probably 20 Irish pubs that had function rooms for gigs. But

now you have to pay to gig in a London pub – kids have to pay like £200 (Dhs950).

What was it like growing up in the '70s music scene?

Everything was happening in the '70s. We were coming out of a period of austerity and things were pretty dark, and then punk came along. It taught us that you didn't need to be a musical virtuoso to start a band – and we certainly were not.

Your videos always look like fun. Does 'madness' describe you all well?

It's been the right name, because it has been madness, everything is madness, the

world is madness. Those videos are recordings of seven young people really enjoying themselves. It wasn't in any way constructed or pretentious, it was totally spontaneous and still is. I keep waiting for the day I grow up, I'm looking forward to it.

What music do you listen to in your spare time?

I don't mind a bit of grime and I was just listening to The Weeknd and Tinie Tempah. On the other end, I'm getting into jazz and things I despised as a kid, but there's a whole raft of music that you'd hate because they were wearing the

wrong trousers, you know?

You've been to Dubai before...

We have, about four years ago. We had a disastrous afternoon at Ski Dubai when our PA went flying down head first, taking all the snow with him.

What can we expect from your Dubai gig?

The usual unbridled joy. Make sure your shoes are done up tightly. You're likely to lose something, if not your marbles.

a Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium, The Irish Village, Dubai, 9.30pm, Dhs250.

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