

TECHNOLOGY

STEVE JOBS regained control of Apple in 1997, as the company teetered on the brink of disaster. What came next was the iMac – and after that, global domination.

If you show your kids one of the very first iMacs (you can still find them for peanuts on eBay, or in secondhand computer shops), they will probably laugh.

After all, by today's standards, the first iMac looks bulky, plasticky, and is woefully underpowered.

But back in 1998, when the machine was announced, it changed the computer industry.

Steve Jobs, who died on October 5 aged 56, had returned to Apple the previous year, as the company looked certain to go under.

He ruthlessly slashed the product line and asked his engineers to produce something revolutionary – a simple consumer computer designed for the internet.

The result was the iMac. It was stylish, reasonably priced (although not cheap) and it ditched the floppy disk drive, while including new-fangled stuff such as USB ports.

It looked nothing like any other computer of its time. People loved it.

The iMac's success laid the foundations for Apple's renaissance. The products that followed – the iBook, iPod, iPhone and iPad – sold in ever greater numbers, at ever-lower prices.

Apple changed. In 1997 it was still a niche company for arty types.

Now it's one of the biggest brands in the world, making consumer electronics that have become all-pervasive in modern society.

The driving force behind all this was Steve Jobs. He created shiny gadgets

that put the internet, a lifetime of music, a camera and a world of games into your pocket at an affordable price.

But his legacy goes deeper than that. Although a wealthy man, he believed in a handful of simple truths – follow your heart, trust your instincts and do what you love, because life's too short to do anything else.



SCROLL THROUGH THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: The world famous Dead Sea Scrolls have been put online for everyone to read. Discovered by Bedouin tribespeople in a cave on the shore of the Dead Sea in 1947, they have fascinated scholars and historians ever since. Now you can go through each one, clicking line-by-line to see an English translation, or zoom in just like a Google map to see the original inscriptions in detail. Start your research at dss.collections.imj.org.il

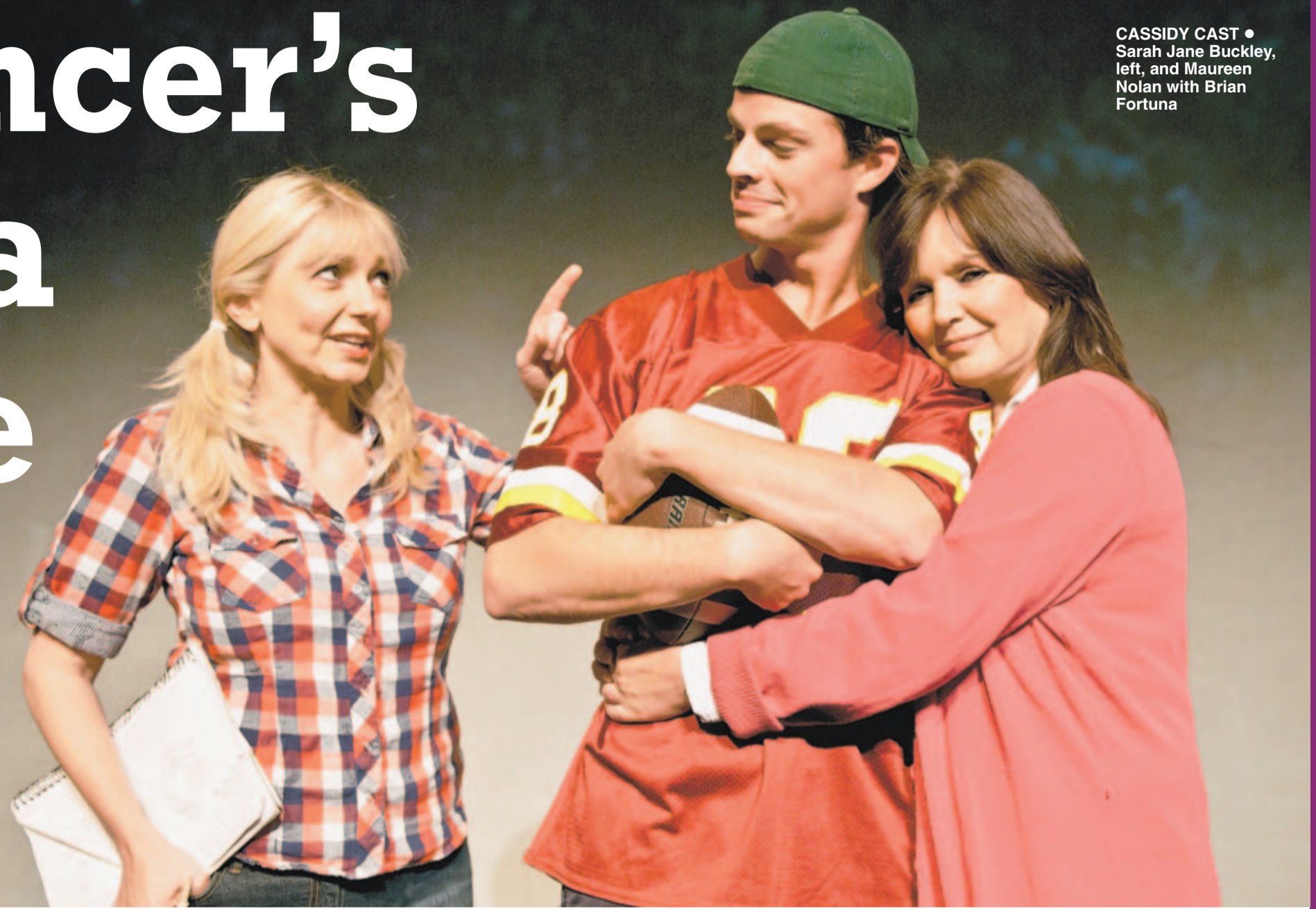
LIVE PHOTO SHARING: Flickr is one of the better-known photo sharing websites, but now it's unveiled a new feature to make the sharing a bit more fun. It's called Photo Session, and it lets you invite other people to a live slideshow through your photos. Your guests don't have to have Flickr accounts, and they can make their own comments in a little chat window as the slideshow progresses. Find out more at flickr.com/photosession

Website of the week

● Turn a typewriter into a USB keyboard at www.usbtypewriter.com

SHOWTIME **LUCY HAMMOND** Finds out how Strictly's Brian Fortuna is faring as a fully-fledged stage actor

Dancer's on a role



CASSIDY CAST ● Sarah Jane Buckley, left, and Maureen Nolan with Brian Fortuna

HIS fancy footwork on the dance-floor ensured that he quickly became a Strictly Come Dancing sensation. But now Brian Fortuna is set on storming the stage in a bid to launch a new career as a musical theatre actor.

The amiable American will be treading the boards in the region this week in a production that sees him making his eagerly anticipated acting debut. He co-stars with Hollyoaks star Sarah Jane Buckley and disco diva Maureen Nolan in the award-winning *Over The Rainbow – The Eva Cassidy Story*, in which he plays the role of Eva's brother, Danny Cassidy.

"For someone stepping into their first acting role, this is a real opportunity for me. To step into something that's so near my own personality is fantastic," adds the heart-throb.

"Danny Cassidy is a very easygoing kind of lad, a kind-hearted musician who has a tough life and a respect for Eva. He watches her back," Brian continues.

Since its first performance, in 2004, the show has wowed audiences all over Europe and received standing ovations from sell-out audiences throughout the UK and Ireland.

Still, despite the production having such an acclaimed reputation, it must be something of a departure for the 29-year-old hooper.

"You know what's strange? It's not the lack of dancing, but not having a partner. My whole life I've always had someone there to do it with me. So on top of being exciting, acting is a real challenge."

Nevertheless, it's a challenge that Brian has embraced wholeheartedly.

"I left Strictly, took a step back, and thought the entertainment industry was what I wanted to do long-term. But I realised that as dancer I

Leaving Strictly was the right thing for me to do at the time because of my longer-term ambitions

wasn't going to be able to do it long-term because once Strictly ends, full-time dancing ends too."

Subsequently, he took a year off to concentrate on an intense programme of acting and vocal training.

"I want to be more like the kind of guy that John Barrowman is. I want to act and sing and dance. It was take a shot or get off the target. I had a bit of a profile from Strictly and could use that opportunity to better myself."

"I took the year off and was very fortunate I was able to do that – to train with a vocal coach. That was awesome and gives me a newfound respect for what people do as actors."

The hard work paid off and now Brian is relishing his role as Danny in *Over The Rainbow*. So how much did he know of Eva Cassidy before he got the part?

"I hadn't heard of her," he admits. "But her popularity has shot up across Europe. Prior to joining the cast, I'd not seen the stage show, just a DVD recording of it. But it's been really interesting for me to see how much research the director and producer, Stephen Leatherland, has done on this project. He's gone out and met Eva's family and they've been really supportive."

That extensive research process is something that has particularly impressed Brian.

"Stephen went out and he met Chris Biondo (Eva's producer, mentor and lover) and the band and that's given him a really good idea of who Eva was and what her story was about. As a member of the audience, you really get a feel of how touching the whole experience was for him."

Brian is also extremely complimentary of his co-stars, saying: "The first or second show I went out on stage and I completely blanked. But, thank God, I'm working with an incredible cast

who were able to save me. Sarah Jane Buckley literally carries the show and she's just an incredible singer and actress, and Maureen Nolan is spectacular – she's a living legend who has worked with some of the biggest names in the business, including Frank Sinatra."

Brian is only too aware that some cynics may doubt his suitability for the role, yet he remains undeterred by that.

"Some people are going to be expecting me to dance and may think I don't know how to act," he says. "But, although acting is completely different to dancing, I think some people have the ability to do things and some don't, and I'm lucky to have that. I'm a born performer."

Indeed, the bronzed, blue-eyed, boy-next-door insists that he began performing when he was "straight out of the womb".

He adds: "My mom had me at stage school. She sent me out when I was a youngster and made me learn ballroom and Latin and lots of other things that, at the time, I didn't want to do."

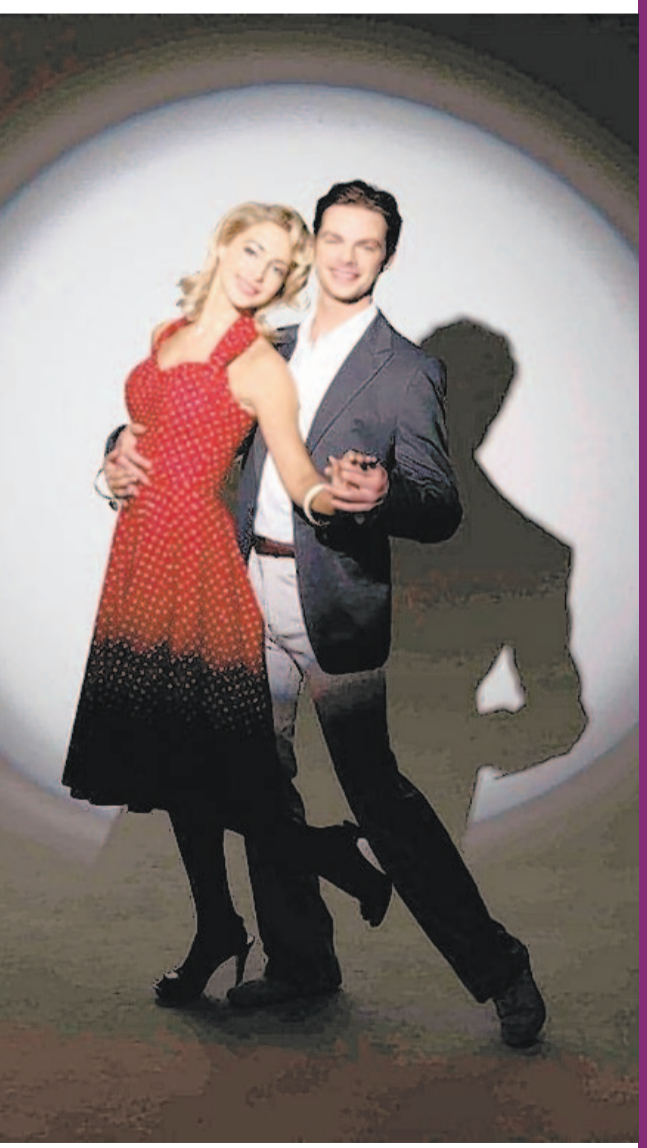
However, he learned to love tripping the light fantastic and admits to experiencing mixed emotions when the current series of Strictly started a few weeks ago.

"You get the biggest buzz imaginable from dancing on live TV. When they say your name, you go on and dance – I get goosebumps just saying that."

So does he regret not being part of this year's line-up?

"Not really. Leaving Strictly was the right thing for me to do at the time because of my longer-term ambitions. I think I have the potential to achieve what I want to achieve and if I don't do it now, when am I going to do it?" he reasons.

● *Over The Rainbow – The Eva Cassidy Story* is at Consett Empire Theatre on October 22 and Barrow in Furness Forum Theatre on October 27, both at 7.30pm. Tickets cost from £14.50 to £17.50 (concessions available). To book, contact the each theatre's box office. For information visit www.theatre-productions.com



PAIRING ● Brian Fortuna and Strictly partner Ali Bastian

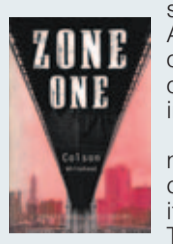
BOOKS

ZONE ONE by Colson Whitehead is published in hardback by Harvill Secker, £14.99. Available now.

Zone One follows "sweeper" Mark Spitz over three days as he cleans up in the aftermath of a seemingly defeated zombie apocalypse. Then it all goes wrong.

Author Colson Whitehead seeks to satirise contemporary America through the outbreak, but his over-written prose gets in the way of clarity.

Sold as "a zombie novel with brains", it could do with taking itself less seriously. The book's at its best when dealing with Spitz's relationship with his two colleagues. But there's too little of this, and too much interior monologue. For a book about zombies, Zone One lacks bite – CHRISTOPHER CORR



human psyche – JAMES FRY

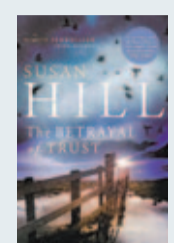
THE BETRAYAL OF TRUST by Susan Hill is published in hardback by Chatto & Windus, £14.99. Available now.

Detective Chief Superintendent Simon Serrailer is back on the bookshelves in mystery writer Susan Hill's sixth instalment.

The idyllic cathedral city of Lafferton is left shaken after a severe storm and flash floods unearth two skeletons.

The findings lead Serrailer to missing teenager Harriet Lowther and a cold case springs back to life.

Readers will be eagerly awaiting book seven to tie up the loose ends – NILIMA DEY SARKER



LITTLE STAR by John Ajvide Lindqvist is published in hardback by Quercus, £12.99. Available now.

Little Star stands out as a book with incredibly potent emphasis on the potential horror within us all.

In a modern setting of reality TV and transient celebrity, a former pop star inexplicably finds a baby girl partially buried in a plastic bag in the woods.

Giving her the kiss of life, she reacts with a cry which forms a perfect musical note. Drawn to the unusually talented child, he takes her home. This proves to be a fateful decision, one which has horrific consequences. Little Star eschews a paranormal horror in favour of the darkness inherent in the



OUR QUEEN by Robert Hardman is published in hardback by Hutchinson, £20. Available now.

Britain's current monarch has occupied the throne for almost 60 years – and this authorised book is a tribute to her and the exemplary manner in which she has performed her constitutional role.

Writer Robert Hardman tells us a lot, but produces few surprises. He never criticises the Queen and at times his unrelenting admiration becomes tedious.

It contains no scandal stories but its account of a domestic spat between the young Queen and her husband, during a 1954 visit to Australia is an absolute gem – ANTHONY LOOCH



GAMES



FIGHTING FORCE ● X-Men: Destiny sees you battling evil in San Francisco

X-Men: Destiny
Formats: Xbox 360 (Reviewed), PS3, Wii, DS, Publisher: Activision

Assumed knowledge can be a double-edged sword – get the balance right and you manage to propel along a story that is all the richer for your fans while keeping the interest of casual viewers.

Get it wrong and, like many of the early Harry Potters, you can leave those not indoctrinated into your world scratching their heads at the appearance of characters and references.

Somewhat, X-Men Destiny manages to place a mutated foot in both camps – with a few familiar faces mixed with more obscure characters and a plot that seems to assume everyone has been keeping up with Marvel continuity for the past 20 years – and yet make it work.

That may be down to the fact the plot is in fairness fairly inconsequential to this Streets of Rage-esque brawler that sees you play as one of three new mutants discovering your powers as

you make way through the streets of San Francisco to stop an Earth-threatening evil.

Yes, the graphics are pretty poor – more akin to a HD conversion of a last generation game – but while it's Activision stablemate Spiderman: Edge of Time manages to drag on with its repetitive enemies and repetitive settings, Destiny does just enough with its environments and button mashing combat to maintain momentum.

It's also, depending on your point of view, mercifully short, with any competent gamer blasting through in probably no more than about five hours. But with three mutant powers to choose from and pairs of upgrades to decide between, there is at least reasonable scope for replays.

Whether it's worth coughing up the full RRP comes down to your love for Wolverine, Cyclops and the gang, but wait a few months for the price to drop and you could find worse ways to while away a Sunday afternoon. 4/5

MICHAEL BROWN

BSSK Mind, Body & Spirit Events

BSSK Mind, Body & Spirit

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Students, Seniors, Disabled £3.50 - Two Day Pass £5.50
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