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PREVIEW



Circus from Rajasthan BRIDPORT

THE colour and drama of one of India's most dramatic and culturally exciting regions, Rajasthan, comes to Bridport on Wednesday 24th July, when Circus Raj performs on the Millennium Green, from 3pm.

Rajasthan, famous for its beautiful "pink" capital, Jaipur, and its stunning forts and palaces, is home to elite street circus performers who come from this fascinating region's entertainment communities. The cast of aerialists, acrobats, musicians, slack-rope walkers, giant puppet characters and the eye-watering displays by their fakir, present a colourful, vibrant, fast-moving extravaganza of intrigue, drama, feats of daring, music, laughter and surprise.

They last visited Bridport Arts Centre in 2022. Now, Circus Raj returns with an exciting and thrilling new show designed to capture the hearts and minds of audiences of all ages in Dorset and across the country, at festivals, melas, community events and carnivals.

Telephone 01308 424204 for tickets.



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Dorset Youth Theatre are taking their play, Triggerfish, to the Edinburgh Festival – some of the company are pictured on part of Dorset's dramatic coast

DYT bound for Edinburgh Fringe DORCHESTER

A TALENTED group of young people, members of DYT Performance Company, part of Dorchester Arts' youth theatre, will be heading north of the border in August to perform a new play, *Triggerfish*, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Triggerfish, devised by the company with local playwright Ed Viney, describes a journey to the darkest, deepest corners of the seabed, where shipwrecks lie inland and tales of watery graves abound, exploring themes of resilience, identity, and the human spirit. Edinburgh Fringe is renowned for its celebration of new talent and this is an amazing opportunity for these young people to experience professional performance where so many received their first break.

"We are incredibly excited to bring *Triggerfish* to the Edinburgh Fringe, but we can't do it alone," says Jo Simons, artistic director of DYT Performance Company. "We need the support of our community to help us make this journey possible. Every contribution, no matter how small, will make a difference in bringing our vision to life."

If you can help, please donate through the dedicated 'DYT in Edinburgh' web page on dorchesterarts.org.uk The play will be at The Space @ Niddry St, in Edinburgh from Monday 5th to Friday 9th August.

New direction for festival CERNE ABBAS

THE long-established and critically-acclaimed Cerne Abbas Music Festival takes a new direction this year,



Richard Hosford, artistic director of Cerne Abbas Music Festival

with a new venue, in addition to the beautiful St Mary's Church, and an autumn programme to look forward to, as well as the July weekend, this year from Friday 12th to Sunday 14th.

Since 1991, the Cerne Abbas festival has welcomed the Gaudier Ensemble to the village every year for a weekend of chamber music of the highest standard in a relaxed atmosphere. The Gaudier Ensemble is an international group of outstanding musicians who have brought a wonderful range of music from the 18th century to the present day with intimate solo performances alongside larger mixed ensemble works.

There has always been a special atmosphere around the festival as these international musicians, directed by clarinettist Richard Hosford, have enjoyed a relaxing break from their busy touring schedules, immersing themselves in the peaceful life of this beautiful village.

The musicians this year are violinists Marieke Blankestijn, Ulrika Jansson and Gabriella Lester, violists Jane Atkins and Claire Hoffman, cellists Sally Pendlebury and Ursula Smith, Steven Williams, double bass, Maggie Cole, harpsichord and Michael Cox, flute.

The programme of concerts at the church across the weekend includes works by Corelli, Barriere, Bach, Telemann, Hummel, Dohnanyi, Rossini and Mozart.

As it enters a new era, the festival will continue to present varied programmes from the established repertoire as well as lesser known works performed by musicians with a particular commitment to chamber music. The aim is to extend the scope of the festival by presenting concerts in other local venues, this year including Ashton Barn at Martinstown, where a concert at 5pm on Sunday 14th will feature Scandinavian and Scottish folk tunes, South American

nuevo tango and Austrian foxtrots.

In future festivals, the musicians will include Gaudier Ensemble members and international colleagues, outstanding young professionals at the start of their careers and students who comprise the next generation of professional musicians. Richard Hosford will continue as the festival artistic director.

Another new feature is an autumn series—details of *Around Mozart*, at Cerne Abbas church from 25th to 27th October will be confirmed later in the year.

Chasing Crockern DARTMOOR



Discover Dartmoor's stories and legends with the Chasing Crockern story-walks

DARTMOOR—like Exmoor, and Bodmin in Cornwall—is a place steeped not only in history but in myths. One significant area is Crockern Tor, once home to the Stannary Parliament, and now the inspiration for a series of story walks, organised by Devon's Villages in Action, in July and August.

Over the centuries all three moors have inspired stories, songs and folk tales—*Lorna Doone*, *Jamaica Inn* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, among others. For thousands of years, man has left his mark on the moors and the moors have carried these memories and personal connections to new generations.

But, asks Villages in Action, what does Dartmoor mean to you? Through a series of community events, the Chasing Crockern project is hunting for stories of the moor from those who live, work or visit there today.

Crockern Tor itself has a significance in the history of the moor. Its location more or less in the middle of the moor made it an ideal venue for the Stannary Parliament, where administrative decisions were made about the management of the collection of tin. There were stannary towns in Devon and Cornwall. The word stannary comes from the Latin word for tin, stannum. The Devon towns were Plympton, Tavistock, Ashburton and Chagford. In legend, the

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tor was said to be the home of the ancient pagan God of Dartmoor—Old Crockern.

The Crockern story walks will be an opportunity to experience live storytelling of traditional Dartmoor folk tales in the part of the moor from where they came. They will be led by Gillian Healey from Dartmoor Walking Tours alongside Dartmoor-based professional storytellers Lisa Schneidau and Sara Hurley. The tales will feature naughty pixies and shapeshifting creatures and the world premiere of *The White Rock and The Black Dog*, a new story created by children from Princetown Community Primary School.

Chasing Crockern explores the area's roots, celebrating the enduring legacy of Dartmoor's folk tales and re-imagining them in ways that resonate with modern life. Villages in Action has an ongoing programme of events, walks, talks, radio features and exhibitions over the next 18 months. The project will culminate in a new storytelling performance in 2025, toured from Crockern Tor to all four quarters of the moor.

The walks are on Sunday 14th July, from 2-5pm, starting at the Two Bridges Hotel, and taking in Crockern Tor and the edge of Wistman's Wood; Thursday 1st August, from 10am- to 1pm around Burrator; Sunday 11th August, from 10am to 2pm, a five or six mile walk around Okehampton, meeting at the town station; and Tuesday 13th August, from 10am to 1pm, from Hound Tor, to the medieval village and Becka Brook.

Summer rep season

SIDMOUTH

THE summer rep season has returned to Sidmouth Manor Pavilion—the three-month series of plays is now the only surviving traditional summer rep, and this year audiences are treated not only to the familiar mix of crime and comedy, but also to some newer and more adventurous plays and a brand-new comedy-thriller by the creator of the brilliant four-person adaptation of John Buchan's *The 39 Steps*.

After opening with a traditional Francis Durbridge thriller, the season continues with Noel Coward's timeless comedy of an artistic and dysfunctional family, *Hay Fever*, from 1st to 6th July. The third play is back to crime, with the off-Broadway hit, Warren

Manzi's *Perfect Crime*, from 8th to 13th July.

There is then a run of four comedies—the endlessly beloved *Yes, Prime Minister*, for the week starting 15th July, Richard Harris' *Party Piece*, set in the back gardens of feuding neighbours, for the week from 22nd July, Yazmina Reza's zeitgeist comedy *God of Carnage*, in which two couples expose all their prejudices and insecurities after one couple's son hits the other's, from 29th July, and another comedy that is utterly of its time, *Abigail's Party*, Mike Leigh's satire of 1970s suburban social-climbers, from 12th August.

Later in the season, there is Peter James' police thriller *Looking Good Dead*, Alan Ayckbourn's *Absurd Person Singular*, Terence Rattigan's wartime drawing room comedy, *While the Sun Shines*, and Ira Levin's *Deathtrap*.

The season ends with an absolute epic as Sidmouth stages one of the greatest stories ever to grace the wide screen—*Ben Hur*. Famously staged in late 19th century theatres, particularly in the American south west, often with real chariot races (with horses!), this version by Patrick Barlow, features just four actors, but we are promised the chariot race—and a sea battle (with actual water)! It runs from 16th to 21st September.

A musical flower

HONITON

BRISTOL-based musician and contemporary folk songwriter Hannah Pawson, who performs as Fritillaries, comes to Honiton's Beehive centre for a solo concert on Thursday 11th July.

Taking her name from the Snake's Head Fritillary, a flower of rebirth and hope, Hannah weaves worlds into her songs accompanying herself with guitar, banjo and harmonium.

While she has been honing her songwriting and live performances since 2017, the arrival of her 2022 debut album resulted in her gaining well-deserved attention and acclaim. Performing as a solo artist, after some years in a duo with Gabriel Wynne, her new music explores her relationship to grief, uncertainty and dealing with chronic illness. Living, loving and songwriting can all feel like gardening; bringing something beautiful into the world from the depths of the earth and through complicated root systems.



Folk singer Fritillaries comes to the Beehive Centre in Honiton



Jamie Grooten will sing the role of Fancy Day and Felix Kemp will be Dick Dewy in the world premiere of Gavin Carr's opera, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, based on Thomas Hardy's early novel, at this year's 50th anniversary Dorset Opera Festival

Hardy novel opera premiere

BRYANSTON

DORSET Opera celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, with performances of one of the world's best-loved operas and the premiere of an opera adapted from a favourite Thomas Hardy novel, with its roots firmly in Dorset. There will be seven performances of the two works at Bryanston School's Coade Hall, Blandford Forum, from 22nd to 27th July.

The title role in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* will be sung by the Japanese soprano Eri Nakamura, who has recently sung the role at Covent Garden, with rising star tenor Jose Simerillo Romero as the callous Pinkerton. There will be four performances of *Butterfly* on the evenings of 22nd, 24th and 27th July, plus a 2pm matinee on Thursday 25th.

Paul Carr's new opera, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, is based on Thomas Hardy's much-loved early novel, which has the subtitle *The Mellstock Quire*. It is set in the village where Hardy was born. Unlike some of his famous later novels with their dark themes—*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *The Return of the Native*, *The Master Builder*, *Jude the Obscure*—this is a bright and optimistic tale of likeable country folk and of the growing love between schoolmistress Fancy Day and farmer Dick Dewy. There are three performances of the new opera, on Tuesday 23rd and Thursday 25th July at 7pm and Saturday 27th at 2pm.

The story is set against the fate of the village's traditional West Gallery choir, which is threatened by the march of modernism, in the shape of a church organ. This was a world that Hardy knew well, and

he tells the story with real affection. It is an endearing tale and has been filmed and adapted for television and stage—now Dorset audiences can experience it in musical glory as an opera, with soprano Jamie Groote as Fancy Day and baritone Felix Kemp as Dick Dewy.

If you have read the novel, you'll know how wonderfully it lends itself to an opera. Composer Paul Carr's melodies are tuneful and lyrical and the opera captures the essence of Hardy's pastoral world while bringing a fresh perspective to his timeless tale of love and tradition in the face of change. This will be a treat for opera enthusiasts and fans of Hardy's literature alike.

Founded in 1974 in Sherborne, Dorset Opera moved to Bryanston and became a fully-fledged festival in 2011, with a remit to present at least two major opera productions each summer. At the end of July each year, the Dorset Opera Festival gives three or four performances each of two fully-staged operas, usually in the original language, with full orchestra and internationally acclaimed soloists alongside emerging British artists and the summer school chorus.

[Wind quintet on tour](#) CONCERTS IN THE WEST

AN award-winning quintet of young woodwind players, Lumas Winds, comes to Dorset and Somerset from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st July for a Concerts in the West series. The wide-ranging programme includes works by Valerie Coleman, Shostakovich and Gyorgy Ligeti.

Lumas Winds will be at Bridport Arts Centre on Friday 19th July for the regular coffee concert, at 11.30am, and Ilminster Arts Centre that evening at 7.30pm, Crewkerne Dance House on Saturday 20th at 7.30pm and St Peter's Church, Shaftesbury on Sunday 21st at 3pm.

Based in London, this dynamic young chamber ensemble won the 71st Royal Over-Seas League Mixed Ensemble Prize in 2023. They are committed ambassadors for wind chamber music and the rich variety of repertoire that it offers. The ensemble are Making Music's Phillip and Dorothy Green Young Artists and earlier this year had a residency at Aldeburgh as Britten Pears Young Artists.

Beth Stone, flute, Chris Vettraino, oboe, Benjamin Hartnell-Booth, French horn, Rennie Sutherland, clarinet, and Florence Plane, bassoon, will play Ligeti's *Six Bagatelles*, Valerie Coleman's *Afro-Cuban Concerto*, a quartet by Dvořák, Shostakovich's *Suite for Wind Quintet*, John Blackwood McEwen's *Under Northern Skies* and a wind quintet by Carl Nielsen.

Alongside classics of the repertoire Lumas enjoy exploring works not currently in the canon but which



Lumas Winds bring a varied programme to Bridport, Ilminster, Crewkerne and Shaftesbury for the July series of Concerts in the West

they believe deserve to be. This is highlighted in the six hidden gems featured on their 2023 debut album, which brings together repertoire from every decade from 1960 to 2010, including three world premiere recordings of music by Sally Beamish, Gavin Higgins and Elizabeth Maconchy.

[Parisian jazz by the sea](#) LYME REGIS

CELEBRATE the music and style of Paris on Bastille Day, Sunday 14th July, when singer Magdalena Atkinson performs classic French chansons at *Jazz by the Sea—Le Voyage à Paris*, at the Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis, at 8pm.

Accompanied by Marine Theatre favourite, pianist Philip Clouts, she will sing a varied programme of well-loved songs from the greats of French 20th century cabaret song, including Edith Piaf, Charles Trenet and Charles Aznavour.

Magdalena's singing is not an impersonation but an interpretation, always heartfelt, sometimes humorous. Musical highlights include *Milord*, *La Vie en Rose*, *Mon Dieu* and, of course, *Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien*.

Edith Piaf was one of the most popular performers



Top Six at the Flix

Bridport Arts Centre

The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert.

Also playing at Bristol Pride on 6th July. "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert presents a defiant culture clash in generous, warmly entertaining ways." The New York Times. Janet Maslin

Bridport Electric Palace

The Beast (2024)

"Across each twist in time and place that can rush together without warning, the grounding force to it all is Seydoux." Collider. Chase Hutchinson.

BBC iPlayer

Everything went fine (2021)

Francois Ozon adapted the memoir of his collaborator and screenwriter Emmanuele Bernheim "André Dussollier and Sophie Marceau are outstanding as a father and daughter whose tricky relationship is upended when he asks for her help to die" The Guardian. Peter Bradshaw.

Netflix

The Spy Game (2001)

Fascinating to watch Robert Redford's old Sundance charm against Brad Pitt "The film is brimming with plots, counterplots, dossiers, and sinister corrupt priorities, all held together by the telephoto obsidian gloss of Scott's look-ma-no-pauses style." Entertainment Weekly. Owen Gleiberman

Disney Plus

Jim Henson: Idea Man

"Henson and Howard are a fine match, and the sort of film you'd expect Ron Howard to make—straightforward, skillful, honest and sympathetic—is pretty much the kind of movie you'd want about Jim Henson." The Wrap. Steve Pond.

Mubi

Alice in the Cities (1974)

"A fine and perhaps unique example of that trickiest of genres, the road movie, and the sort of film that really does deserve the cliched response: they don't make them like that any more, because they really don't." The Guardian. Peter Bradshaw



The Madalitso Band bring the sounds and rhythms of Malawi to Lyme Regis

in France during the Second World War. Her nervous energy and small stature inspired the nickname that stayed with her all her life: *La Môme Piaf* ("The Little Sparrow").

She commissioned songs that romanticised her life on the streets, emphasising her passion and inner strength. Her music was often autobiographical with her singing reflecting her life, particularly in songs of love, loss and sorrow. She died in 1963. Her last words were: "Every damn fool thing you do in this life, you pay for."

Malawi buskers on tour LYME REGIS

A DUO from Malawi who were discovered busking outside a shopping centre in 2009 have gone on to gain a reputation across Africa and Europe for vibrant and exciting music. The Madalitso Band is coming to the Marine Theatre at Lyme Regis on Wednesday 24th July at 8pm.

Described as "a two-man musical army," babatone player Yobu Malinga and guitarist Yosefe Kalekeni really get the crowd on their feet dancing wherever they play. With their strong vocals and traditional music style, they have become favourites with festival audiences including at Womad, Roskilde and Sauti Za Busara, the Zanzibar-based African music festival.

The babatone is a home-made instrument popular in Malawi. Together with Kalekeni's four-string guitar, the duo create the traditional Malawi 'banjo' sound.

Comedy first DORCHESTER

MAYBE laughter isn't the first thing that comes to mind if you think about Thomas Hardy, but Tom Browns at Dorchester is aiming to change all that with the launch of *Hardy Har*, the town's first comedy festival, on Saturday 13th July.

Laughter comes to High East Street as Tom Browns pub joins forces with Dorchester Arts, The Kings Arms and Shire Hall museum to host the festival. The day will include an array of comedy performances from stand-up to sketch shows. There's also plenty for the family as The Great Baldini takes the stage at Dorchester Arts followed by a free improv performance by Brave Bold Drama.

Tickets are available from eventbrite.co.uk.

A midsummer Lyme delight

LYME REGIS

ANDREW Rattenbury has done it again—after finding drama and laughter in some of Lyme’s historic events, the actor-playwright brought the magic and mayhem of Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream* into modern-day Lyme Regis with a colourful and clever mash-up of the Bard’s comedy and the lives and memories of local people.

A Midsummer Lyme’s Dream, staged at the Marine Theatre during the very unsummery late days of June, had all the familiar Shakespeare characters—including Oberon, Titania, Puck and Bottom with his fellow hempen homespuns—but also delved into memories of growing up in Lyme, why locals love the town and some of the famous people who lived or visited, including Jane Austen, Tom Jones’ creator Henry Fielding and (of course) the best-known Lyme native, Mary Anning,

The action was framed around plans for a midsummer celebration, and a group of local actors who have got together to make a play for the event. Meanwhile, warring fairies Titania and Oberon and their mischievous followers are conducting their domestic battles through the woods around a much-loved wych elm. Two runaway lovers arrange to meet by the tree and two other young people follow them ... you know the story.

With great music—from pop and rock to Vivaldi and Bach—and gorgeous, imaginative costumes, this was an evening of laughter and nostalgia, a true celebration of what makes Lyme Regis special (and why Shakespeare is truly for all time!)

A Small Quiet English Town

SIDMOUTH

AS Sidmouth prepares for its week-long folk festival in August, a documentary about the town and its long relationship with folk music is released, with screenings at Honiton’s Beehive Centre on 26th July, at 2pm and 7pm.

A Small Quiet English Town—A Sidmouth Folk Story, by TPL Films, is a journey through the long history of the festival, which celebrates its 70th anniversary this year.

The producers used previously unseen film and photographs donated through archive collections or found in attics, sheds and even rubbish skips, after decades of neglect, to tell the story of what is said to be Europe’s longest running folk festival,

With interviews, performances and memories from festivals going back decades, it tells the story of how Sidmouth Folk Week became the highpoint in the English folk calendar.

Among legendary and contemporary folk stars featured in the film are Ralph McTell (*Streets of London*), Steve Knightley of Show of Hands, India Electric Company, Lori Campbell, Edgelarks and The Oysterband.



A documentary about Sidmouth’s Folk Festival showing at The Beehive in Honiton in July

The Young Lit Fix



***A Girl Called Corpse* By Reece Carter**

Illustrations by Eleonora Asparuhova

Published by Usborne

Paperback £7.99

Review by Nicky Mathewson

OUT to sea, near a town called Elston-Fright is a tiny island that nobody on the mainland can see. It’s not that it’s invisible, rather that it is instantly forgotten: The Rock-That-Doesn’t-Exist.

On this rock is a dusty, falling down shack and in this shack live 3 witches. What the witches don’t know is that they are not the only ones residing there.

It is also home to a ghost called Corpse.

Long ago the witches took something from Corpse. She has no idea what it was. She doesn’t remember anything about her life, not even her real name, but a visit from a mysterious old man ghost, changes all that.

He gives her a message from a supposed “friend” telling her of the treasure that was stolen and where she should start looking for it. Corpse doesn’t know how she is going to get off The-Rock-That-Doesn’t-Exist, but she is certain that finding this treasure will give her back her lost memories of her name, her life and her family.

Things aren’t that simple though, especially when you’re a ghost and there are 3 witches on your tail, but what does she have to lose?

This is a fabulously quirky, spooky, adventure which I thoroughly enjoyed. Great twists and turns to the plot and instantly likeable characters. It’s a must read for adventure and mystery fans aged 9+

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