

November PREVIEW

Tales from the gallows

STURMINSTER NEWTON & PORTLAND

GALLOWES humour gets a make-over when Ha Hum Ah Theatre brings its new play, *Making A Killing*, to Dorset with Artsreach on 11th and 14th November.

The play, which opened at Cornwall's open air Minack Theatre, is a razor-sharp, dark comedy about justice, corruption—and the cost of survival in a world disturbingly like our own.

The ropes are ready, the crowd is waiting and the hangman has a new apprentice ...

When Claus Kohler is apprenticed to Master Frantz Schmidt, Nuremberg's seasoned executioner, the two men are thrown together in a world where duty, morality and power collide—every decision leaves a mark. These were dangerous times—as the gallows fill and suspicion takes root, the fates of the two men become dangerously entwined, until both must decide who they are, and which side of the rope they stand on.

This play is based on a true story, drawn from the diaries kept by Schmidt, who, from 1573 to 1617, was the executioner for the towns of Bamberg and Nuremberg. During that span, he personally executed more than 350 people while keeping a journal throughout his career.

Making a Killing is at Queen's Theatre, Barnstaple, on 4th and 5th November, 11th November at the Exchange at Sturminster Newton and 14th at Royal Manor Theatre, Portland, both with Dorset's rural touring charity, Artsreach.

Celebrating Palestrina with Tallis Scholars DORCHESTER

ONE of the country's finest chamber choirs, The Tallis Scholars come to St Mary's Church, Dorchester, on 11th November, in a programme that celebrates the 500th anniversary of the birth of one of the greatest musical figures of the Renaissance, Giovanni Pierluigi Palestrina.

Over the past five decades, Peter Phillips and The Tallis Scholars have helped to establish the sacred vocal music of the Renaissance as one of the great repertoires of Western classical music.

The programme will include one of Palestrina's 107 settings of the Mass, alongside several of his most moving motets. In a striking dialogue across centuries, the concert also features works by the renowned Estonian composer Arvo Pärt, whose contemplative sound world provides a modern counterpoint to the Renaissance master.

Founder and conductor Peter Phillips says: "There would be many different ways of acknowledging Palestrina's achievement ... and making a comparison with one of his peers. Although Pärt doesn't write polyphony in the way Palestrina exemplified, he can create an atmosphere in his music which sits well alongside that of the Renaissance master—their two views, old and contemporary, of the Nunc dimittis text are fascinating."

This Dorchester performance offers a rare chance to hear one of the world's most celebrated vocal ensembles in the intimate and resonant setting of St Mary's Church. dorchesterarts.org.uk



Artsreach brings Making A Killing to Sturminster Newton and Portland in November

Christmas at Bridport Arts Centre

Wings of Desire (1987)

📅 Thursday 27 Nov.
🕒 7.30pm

Primordial Dance

An exhibition of paintings by Helen Garrett with poetry by Kate Innes
📅 From 29 Nov, Tue-Sat
🕒 10am-4pm

Consone Quartet

- Haydn and Mozart
📅 Friday 28 Nov.
🕒 11.30am

La Vie en Rose

- Gypsy Jazz
📅 Friday 28 Nov
🕒 8.00pm

All That Heaven Allows

(1955)
📅 Saturday 29 Nov
🕒 2.30pm

Vermiglio (2024)

📅 Thu 4 Dec
🕒 7.30pm

The Demon Barbers

- 25th Anniversary Tour
📅 Friday 5 Dec.
🕒 7.30pm

Cabaret With Claus

- The Christmas Show
📅 Saturday 6 Dec
🕒 7.30pm

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (1964)

📅 Thursday 11 Dec
🕒 7.30pm

Menopause of Sound

Christmas Party
📅 Saturday 13 Dec
🕒 4.30pm

The Mellstock Band

- The Christmas Hearth
📅 Thursday 18 Dec
🕒 7.30pm

The Cratchits' Christmas Cracker

📅 Friday 19 Dec
🕒 7.30pm

Winter Celebration

📅 Sat 20 Dec
🕒 6pm



Tickets

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That Knave, Raleigh is in Dorchester and Taunton in November

A royal favourite's fall from grace

DORCHESTER

THE Elizabethan adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh, one of history's most charismatic characters, is brought back to Dorset at Dorchester Corn Exchange on 6th November in a Dyad theatre production, *That Knave, Raleigh*, which follows the astonishing highs and lows of his dramatic career. Andrew Margerison, who also wrote the play, plays a man who was the favourite of one monarch, Queen Elizabeth I, and fell fatally foul of another, James I.

Raleigh's Dorset connection is Sherborne Castle. In 1592, the explorer, soldier, dandy and poet was granted a lease to Old Sherborne Castle by Elizabeth. But he found it difficult to renovate, so he built a new house, Sherborne Lodge (now Sherborne Castle), in the castle grounds, completed in 1594. Raleigh's estate was forfeited after he fell out of favour with King James, and the property was later purchased by Sir John Digby, whose family has owned it ever since.

That Knave, Raleigh is the latest play from Dyad, whose previous productions have included *A Christmas Carol*, *Lady Susan*, *A Room of One's Own*, *Christmas Gothic*, *Austen's Women* and *Female Gothic*.

In a life spanning around 65 years, Raleigh achieved more than others might do in a hundred lifetimes. His story ranges from the Huguenots to the Armada, from adventures in the New World to the horror of a public beheading in Old Palace Yard.

The final chapter of Raleigh's life is perhaps the

most daring, strange and heart-breaking. Margerison's retelling details the hero's fall from grace taken directly from historical records. *That Knave, Raleigh* is also at the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre at Taunton on 7th November.

A new light on old tunes

VILLAGES

A VIRTUOSO trio of folk musicians, Jon Doran and the Northern Assembly, have a short tour with Artsreach, coming to the village halls at Shipton Gorge on Friday 7th November, Langton Matravers on Saturday 8th and Drimpton on Sunday 9th, all at 7.30pm.

Shining a new light on old tunes and tales from the British Isles, this new musical collaboration seeks to capture the excitement that lies within traditional song and breathe new life into old stories by injecting the energy they feel these narratives deserve.

With virtuosic instrumentalists Heather Ferrier (accordion) and Jordan Aikin (whistles and pipes), the trio create songs that combine exhilarating contemporary arrangements with the much loved traditional performance style and striking vocals of acclaimed folk singer Jon Doran.

Consciously moving away from the conventional folk song performance style, the trio rely upon their dissimilar musical upbringings and experiences to conjure emotions and communicate a story far deeper than the words of the song.

Selling the American dream

DORCHESTER

MAJOR national annual dates these days are at least as much about selling as they are about celebrating—and that's certainly the case in *Terry's: An American Tragedy About Cars, Customers, and Selling Cars to Customers*, coming to Dorchester Arts at the Corn Exchange on Thursday 13th November.

Memorial Day weekend ... the US-of-A. The sales team at Terry's Cars and Automobiles is preparing to honour the fallen by slashing prices on some gently used, (mostly) American-made cars. But the pressure's on—if Terry's team doesn't shift 66 cars by Monday, there'll be hell to pay...

From award-nominated, Lecoq-trained company Brillig, Terry's is an absurd, sitcom-style tragicomedy with original live music, physical theatre and one very special balloon. There's no guarantee the team will reach the target, but it's going to be the ride of your life.

Period instrument stars

CONCERTS IN THE WEST

FOUR musicians who were the first period instrument string quartet to be selected as BBC New Generation Artists come to Dorset and Somerset on 28th and 29th November, on the final Concerts in the West tour of 2025.

Consone Quartet—Agata Daraškaite and Magdalena Loth-Hill, violins, Elitsa Bogdanova, viola, and George Ross, cello—formed their ensemble at the Royal College of Music in London, and are in demand with their expressive interpretations of repertoire, notably from the classical and romantic eras.

The late Sir Roger Norrington said of them: "They play with perfect intonation, tremendous attack and impeccable historical style. All the four instruments work together with such intelligence and imagination that I would happily listen to them every day."

The quartet launched their professional career in 2015, shortly after which they were awarded two prizes at the 2015 York Early Music International Young Artists Competition, including the EUBO Development Trust Prize and a place on an emerging artists scheme in France. They went on to win the 2016 Royal Over-Seas League Ensemble Prize, and in 2022 were awarded a prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust (BBT) fellowship.

As well as enthusiastic receptions at London's major venues, they have

performed in Poland, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Bulgaria and Slovenia and at festivals including Edinburgh, Cheltenham, Dartington, Two Moors and Buxton. Consone are Artists-in-Residence at Paxton House (2023-2025) and at Saxon Shore Early Music Kenardington (2024-2027).

For the regular coffee concert at Bridport Arts Centre at 11.30am on Friday 28th November, they will be playing Haydn's *String Quartet in G minor*, and for the two full-length concerts at Ilminster Arts Centre that evening, and Crewkerne Dance House on Saturday 29th, both at 7.30pm, they will be playing Hugo Wolf's *Italian Serenade*, Mozart's *String Quartet No 18 in A major* and Beethoven's *String Quartet in B-flat major, Op 130*.

Just your average bloke.

BRIDPORT

GEOFF Norcott is that very rare thing on the UK comedy scene—he is a Conservative! But coming out as a right-winger hasn't impeded his career too badly, and he is now on a new tour, *Basic Bloke 2—There's no Bloke without Fire*—coming to the Electric Palace at Bridport on Saturday 15th November.

He revealed his political alignment in 2013, when he was nominated for Best New Show at the Leicester Comedy Festival for Geoff Norcott. *Occasionally Sells*



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Out, which was about—among other things—the fact he was now a Conservative voter. He also took this show to the Edinburgh Fringe.

This new national tour 2025-2026 for a regular star of *Have I Got News For You*, *The Last Leg*, *Would I Lie to You?*, *Live At The Apollo*, *8 Out of 10 Cats*, *The News Quiz*, *Geoff Norcott's Working Men's Club* and many more, is his first tour under a Labour government, so he's got plenty to get off his chest!

Geoff is also taking advantage of the rediscovered tolerance towards jokes being jokes to tell you what he really thinks. How much he judges people. Bad parents, people who eat too much, anyone who wears a dressing gown beyond 9am ... it's fair to say the gloves are off.

Unlike most sequels, *Basic Bloke 2* will move beyond some of the themes of the original (while fully aware that a comedian doing a 'sequel' at all is a bit ridiculous). He's been moving in male mental health circles for a while, but while they're all saying blokes should 'check in' on each other, he's wondering what happens if you do 'check in' all the time but they mainly want to send you politically incorrect memes.

When two equals 13

HONITON

DON'T expect a crowded stage when Blackheart Orchestra comes to Honiton's Beehive centre on Saturday 8th November—there are only two of them, but these talented multi-instrumentalists between them play up to 13 instruments, including acoustic and electric guitars, bass and bowed guitars, piano, organ, vintage synthesisers, omnichord, melodica, glockenspiel and electric percussion.

Chrissy Mostyn and Rick Pilkington draw on a kaleidoscopic range of influences from Pink Floyd and Kate Bush to contemporary minimalist composers Steve Reich and Philip Glass. The duo combine folk and rock roots with electronica and classical.

They are supported by Foxpalmer, a London-based band playing a blend of rock, Americana-style folk and indie, to create a sound that is as striking and captivating as it is different. Their debut album, *Dark Tides*, is released this year.

Biscuits and home.

LITTON CHENEY

BISCUITS are a familiar feature of most European culinary traditions and they have a special place in the heart of Croatian actress Tina Hofman, who brings her one-woman show, *Pepper and Honey*, to Litton Cheney Community Hall on Sunday 30th November—appropriately in the afternoon, at 2.30pm. Tea and biscuits anyone?

Ana has been on a journey. Born in Croatia, she has arrived in the UK, determined to make it home, But as she focuses on life in this new land, she is haunted by the voice of her grandmother—calling for her to stay true to her national identity and yearning for Ana to come home.

As Grandma bakes her traditional Croatian pepper biscuits (believed to bring a loved one back home), will this be enough to be reunited with her granddaughter? But what is "home" to Ana now?

Pepper and Honey is a poignant, subtle and timely play about the journey, familiar in these troubled times to so many migrants and refugees, of change, cultural differences and the conflict between upholding the traditions of the "old country" and embracing those of the new.

And, with perfect timing, Croatian pepper biscuits are baked during the show and with the help of the audience.



*Blackheart Orchestra comes
to Honiton in November*



Fabulous Red Diesel are coming to Lyme Regis in November

Jazz and soul by the sea LYME REGIS

THE *Jazz by the Sea* programme at the Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis, brings the acclaimed Fabulous Red Diesel to Dorset on Sunday 16th November.

Playing an appealing blend of jazz and soul, the band released an eighth studio album, *Goddess the Seahorse*, in 2024, and a new live album this year, and is fast becoming one of the most talked about bands on the circuit.

With vocals that hint at iconic voices from Barbara Streisand to Eartha Kitt, beautiful original songs and sophisticated arrangements, the Fabulous Red Diesel opened for The James Taylor Quartet and sold out Upstairs at Ronnie Scott's three times.

They have played Cheltenham Jazz Festival, Rye and Sidmouth Jazz Festivals, as well as appearances at Boomtown, Small World, The Green Gathering and Glastonbury. Ian Bowden of Sidmouth Jazz Festival described them as "an amazing and original band with excellent musicianship, outstanding arrangements and infectious grooves."

Young cello star with BSO EXETER

A RISING star of the cello, Hugo Svedberg, joins the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra on Thursday

13th November, at Exeter University Great Hall, for a concert entitled *Sunshine and Shade*. He will be playing one of Tchaikovsky's best-loved pieces, the *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, a work characterised by carefree charm, grace and the indomitable spirit of his idol, Mozart, filtered through his own Russian and Romantic sensibilities.

The concert, conducted by David Hill, also includes Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin*, Faure's *Pelleas et Melisande Suite*, and Mendelssohn's *Italian Symphony* (No 4).

Still in his teens, Hugo Svedberg won first prize in the national Pole Star Prize for Swedish young musicians in 2024. In the same year he appeared on BBC Young Musician. He began playing the cello aged six and studies with Adrian Brendel. He has been a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and has won several competitions, including the Two Moors Festival Competition and the Bromsgrove Young Musicians Senior Platform.

He is a music and academic scholar at Canford School in Dorset. In his free time he enjoys playing tennis and paddleboarding. Hugo plays a fine Tecchler cello on loan from a generous sponsor through the Beare's International Violin Society.

Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* is perhaps one of his most personal creations and is a memorial to

Top Six at the Flix

Bridport Arts Centre

Wings of Desire (1987)

Astonishing things happen and symbolism can only work by being apparent. For me, the film is like music or a landscape: It clears a space in my mind, and in that space I can consider questions. Chicago Sun-Times. Roger Ebert.

All That Heaven Allows (1955)

All That Heaven Allows is the fountain from which directors as disparate as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Todd Haynes, and John Waters have all drunk. Slant Magazine. Eric Henderson.

Mildred Pierce (1945)

Impeccable, bleak gloss, with the supreme Crawford engineering the greatest comeback of them all. Mildred Pierce is one of the finest noir soap operas ever, with the queen of pathos shouldering the storm alone. Best Actress. TV Guide Magazine.

McCullin (2012)

While the pictures have a stark power undiminished by the passage of time, it's the photographer's eloquent commentary that provides the film with its most moving moments. Hollywood Reporter. Frank Scheck.

Bridport Electric Palace

I Swear (2025)

I Swear is surely destined to be one of those break out British films that does stellar business and it deserves to be seen because it is both life affirming and uplifting. Any Good Films. Simon Hooper.

Langham Wine Estate as part of Purbeck Film Festival

Withnail and I (1987)

It had a miraculously literate script whose every line deservedly became a quotable classic and the film boasts a once-in-a-lifetime combination of perfect performances. The Guardian. Peter Bradshaw.

the fallen in the First World War, including his friends and brothers. Profoundly moving, this is a work infused with love and devotion for lost loved ones.

The women who spied.

VILLAGES

SINGER song-writer Louise Jordan, who specialises in telling the hidden histories of women over the past couple of centuries, is touring a new show, *Behind Enemy Lines*, which has a four-date Artsreach tour in November, on 7th at Broadwindsor Comrades Hall, Saturday 8th at Marnhull village hall, Sunday 9th at Nether Compton and Friday 14th at Piddletrenthide's Memorial Hall.

This new show tells the story of the women who worked as spies in occupied France during the Second World War. Based on Louise's extensive research, the show brings the women of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) to life through original song, live music and storytelling.

After the fall of France in 1940, SOE was established by Winston Churchill to 'set Europe ablaze'. These extraordinary women were trained in sabotage, subversion and silent killing. Thirty-nine women were infiltrated into Nazi-occupied France and together their courage, daring, ingenuity and sacrifice helped defeat Nazi terror. *Behind Enemy Lines* brings their stories to life...

Louise has a Masters degree in Human Rights and 10 years' experience touring the UK and Europe. She accompanies herself on guitar and keyboard, and has released seven recordings gaining national radio play on the BBC Radio 2 Folk Show & Radio 4.

In 2016 she began touring her critically acclaimed one woman show *No Petticoats Here*, about extraordinary women of the First World War and in 2018 created *The Hard Way*, the story of working class suffragette Hannah Mitchell. In 2020, she launched *Florence*, to celebrate the many inspirational achievements of Florence Nightingale in her 200th anniversary year. In 2021, Louise launched a new project, *Pop-Up Pedestal*, challenging audiences to consider who is commemorated in our public spaces and why.

She has had commissions by many national and regional organisations, including Parliament, Dreadnought South West, the V&A Museum and Groninger Museum, and has worked with the National Trust and University of Oxford to share her approach to opening the history books and sharing hidden women's histories through song.

Louise Jordan's *Behind Enemy Lines* has two more dates in the New Forest, on Saturday 15th November, at the Jubilee Hall, Fawley, and St Marks Community Hall at Pennington, on Sunday 16th.

Oh yes it is

PANTO VENUES

SINCE COVID, the pattern of event booking has changed radically, and venues around the country are trying to make sense of the new normal, which means that audiences either book months or even years in advance (usually for comedians, big musicals or rock bands) or at the very last minute.

Perhaps the one exception is the annual pantomime, which hangs onto its appeal from generation to generation. Theatres are juggling with dates. Gone is the opening-on-Boxing Day tradition, replaced by November starts to accommodate school parties and most shows now finish sometime early in January. Some families book as soon as they



Jon Monie and Tristan Gemmill appear in Peter Pan at Bath

have been to the annual panto, all ready for the fun 12 months down the line. They get the best prices and the widest choice of seats, even if they don't know what the show is or who will be in it.

The 2025-26 season is now announced and costume and set makers around the country are getting ready with ever-more-inventive and spectacular colours and styles to delight children and their parents over the Christmas period.

The most popular story this year is that of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and it will be performed at Exeter Northcott Theatre by Le Navet Bete from 27th November to 4th January, at Bristol's grand Hippodrome with a starry cast led by Will Young from 6th December to 4th January, and at Weymouth Pavilion, where local favourite Jamie Riding leads the company from 19th December to 3rd January.

Peter Pan will be flying in to take the Darling children on the adventure of a lifetime at Bath Theatre Royal from 11th December to 11th January, with Tristan Gemmill as arch-baddie Captain Hook. *Peter Pan* is also the choice of Southampton Mayflower, where Alexandra Burke takes on the villainous role from 13th December to 4th January.

With the Octagon still closed, Westlands at Yeovil has been re-fitted for theatre audiences, and now it's one of the best pantomime venues in the south west. This year's show is *Beauty and the Beast*, on stage from 12th December to 4th January.

Taunton Brewhouse's Christmas show is not a ballet. They will be staging a new stage version of the famous story of *The Nutcracker*, from 2nd to 28th December.

Bristol's Old Vic Theatre has a new production of *Treasure Island* from 4th December to 11th January.

Younger children might enjoy the Plymouth Drum Studio production of Raymond Brigg's *Father Christmas*, on stage from 27th November to 28th December at various day times.

Tickets are selling fast, so visit theatre's websites for full details.

The Young Lit Fix



Scarlet Morning
Written and illustrated
by N D Stevenson
Published by Quill Tree
Books/Harper Collins
Hardback £14.99

Reviewed by
Nicky Mathewson

TWO children, Viola and Wilmur, are stranded in a starving salt encrusted town called Caveat, waiting for their parents to return. They have been abandoned here longer than they can remember but still hold on to the hope that their parents will come back for them. They only have one prized possession which is a mysterious book filled with pages they don't understand and a compartment that is locked.

Caveat used to be a town with a bustling harbour but gradually the sea turned sour and the salt crept closer and closer until there was no sight of the ocean any more. They would often walk out across the ragged floes of salt to find shipwrecks to explore for provisions, but the ocean they found didn't resemble the one they had read about in books. It was sickly and the salt spray would burn.

One night during a ferocious storm there came a knock at the door. Viola and Wilmur knew not to open it as the day had been full of bad omens, but the door came crashing in and in its place stood a tall imposing figure of a woman peering out at them from beneath a wide brimmed hat.

Cadence Chase, captain of a fine ship with an eccentric crew of diabolical pirates. Chase is looking for something and she believes the children have it. The children need a way out of Caveat to search for their parents. Should they swap their treasured possession for a ride out of there?

N D Stevenson, the creator of *Nimona*, brings us a sensational, magical, pirate adventure which is the first in a duology of illustrated novels. Full of plot twists and humour this is perfect for confident readers age 9+

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