

January PREVIEW



Graffiti Classics bring their hilarious musical show to Wootton Fitzpaine in January. Photograph David Pickens

Laughter with strings WOOTTON FITZPAINE

COMEDY classical music quartet Graffiti Classics come to Dorset in early January for a three date tour with Artsreach, the rural touring charity, starting on Thursday 8th at Wootton Fitzpaine village hall, followed by Lytchett Matravers on Friday 9th and the Corn Exchange at Blandford on Saturday 10th, all at 7.30pm.

With 16 strings, eight dancing feet and four voices, this is an electrifying and hilarious musical show. Graffiti Classics are a multi-talented string quartet who never sit down, bursting the perceived elitist boundaries of traditional classical music with an all-singing, all-dancing musical comedy show.

Wickedly funny, the group energetically leap and clown their way through an eclectic musical landscape, from Beethoven to Elvis! Graffiti Classics are on a mission: to make classical music irresistibly fun.

Festival bids farewell SHUTE

SHUTE Festival, based in the little village near

Honiton, began in 2016, but now, at the end of its tenth year, the organisers have said goodbye.

In their pre-Christmas announcement, Sam Knights and Bijan Omrani say: "It is hard to believe that a decade has gone by since we flung open the doors of Shute Festival at St Michael's Church in our tiny hamlet in East Devon.

"None of us founders—Sam Knights, Bijan Omrani and Paddy Magrane—had ever run a festival before and that surely helped in taking the plunge! But we collectively loved books, ideas, performance and most of all bringing people together. Speakers came and audiences too. There are too many highlights to individually mention names but we are beyond proud of what we brought to Shute and to the surrounding area.

"We walked in the extraordinary landscapes of this area, visited our 1000 year old ancient oak a number of times, listened to musical performances from sitar to string quartets, watched films and spoke to an artist on death row in Arkansas by phone after the film about his life, saw the magnificent short film about the *Macbeth* performance in Shute which went



Mark Watson comes to the Electric Palace in Bridport in January

The play, produced by award-winning OffPiste Theatre, is described as a dark comedy thriller which explores themes of class, gentrification, assumption and taxi driving. It had its premiere at the Merlin Theatre in Frome in November, as part of the theatre's 50th anniversary celebrations.

The audience follows one driver's epic encounter with a young woman and her two small children. Battling to tell his tale against the backdrop of an ever-ringing phone, it is clear he has become more involved in the lives of his passengers than he ever intended.

Drawing on his own experiences working as a taxi driver in the town, Dan moved to Frome with his parents, brother, nan, uncle, auntie and cousin to reopen the historic Griffin pub in the 80s and, after a decade away, returned to the call of home.

As Dan explains: "Actors often have to take on other work, in my case warehousing, bar work, cheese-packing etc, and my taxi driving started out in just the same way—providing great source material for character study, and anecdotes and lived experience."

[Taskmaster star on tour](#)

BRIDPORT

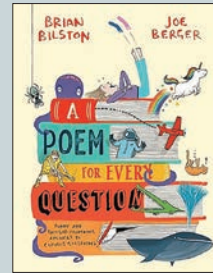
A RECENT encounter with a stranger caused comedian Mark Watson to ponder the uncertain future facing humanity. Not obvious material for a stand-up, but Mark's fertile imagination and quick wit have turned unpromising material into comedy gold as he comes to Bridport's Electric Palace on Saturday 17th January with *Before It Overtakes Us*.

A 20-year veteran of the stand-up circuit, Mark is also known for his cheeky texts on *Taskmaster*, and is a multi-award-winning YouTube cult figure, Radio 4 favourite and recently *Baby Reindeer* actor. He is now back on the UK circuit after seasons at the Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Edinburgh comedy festivals.

The new show embraces everything from the grim predictions of humanity's future to the current state of the UK sausage industry, and much more—in a typically frantic and fun-packed new show.

GPW

The Young Lit Fix



A Poem For Every Question

By Brian Bilston

Illustrated by Joe Berger

Published by Red Shed

Hardback £16.99

**Reviewed by
Nicky Mathewson**

If ever there was a quirky, uplifting book to start the new year, this is it! It's a fabulous concept. A long list of questions that children ask, which are all answered through poetry. For example:

"Which animal hides the best?

How many dimples are there on a golf ball?

Who invented the first car?

How young can the US president be?

What are rainbows made of?"

And one of my favourites:

"What causes a tornado?

So then, where best should I begin to tell
you how tornadoes spin?

One starts I guess, with a thunderstorm
—a supercell—in which a vortex forms,
a whizzing, whirling, swirling tunnel
that siphons warm air like a funnel,
up and out, with cold air down,
until the vortex tilts; it spins around,
an ever-faster spiralled cloud,
Stretching out, down to the ground
and sets off on its deadly course,
A wild, unstoppable, untamed force."

This wonderful rhyming answer is presented in a twirling tornado illustration which fills the whole page.

Beautifully produced on quality paper in a hard back format making it perfect for a gift.

With illustrations on every page, what could be a better way to fill young minds, and old alike, with wondrous facts of all shapes and sizes? I love it!

10% off for Marshwood Vale readers at The Bookshop on South Street, Bridport. 01308 422964 www.dorsetbooks.com