

April PREVIEW



The Gigspanner Big Band take the stage at the Marine Theatre in Lyme Regis in April

Multi-cultural music.

LYME REGIS

THE Marine Theatre at Lyme Regis hosts one of the most exciting and eclectic music programmes in the region. April is typical, with gigs that vary from folk star Martha Tilston on Thursday 2nd to world jazz exponents Talking Spirits on Sunday 26th.

With a pure silken voice and lyrics that inspire and captivate, Martha Tilston has a large and loyal following. She has performed on some of the world's most prestigious stages and festivals, recorded and released several critically acclaimed albums and gained a nomination for BBC best newcomer. She has appeared as a guest vocalist for Zero 7, toured internationally and worked with a wide range of performers including Damien Rice, Nick Harper, Kae Tempest and Roddy Frame (Aztec Camera).

Founded in 2009 by Deekline and Ed Solo, Jungle Cakes, at the Marine on Saturday 4th, has become a cornerstone of the drum-and-bass and jungle music scenes. Known for its high-energy releases and distinctive sound, the label has consistently delivered chart-topping tracks that ignite dance floors and captivate listeners worldwide. For this visit to the Marine, the label's founders take to the stage alongside V Recordings and Full Cycle Records legend Suv.

One of the most revered performers in any musical

genre, Joni Mitchell is the inspiration for the seven-piece band Hejira. They have a gig to celebrate the Canadian singer-songwriter at the Marine on Thursday 9th. Focusing mainly on Joni's music from the late 70s, the world-class musicians are fronted by the brilliant Hattie Whitehead, who not only has—in her own way—assimilated the poise, power and beauty of Joni's vocals, but also plays guitar with Joni's stylistic mannerisms. Expect an evening of the great songs including *Amelia*, *Help Me*, *A Case Of You*, *Song For Sharon* and *Free Man in Paris*.

Trad meets experimentation when the Gigspanner Big Band takes the stage. Coming to the Marine on Thursday 16th, the six musicians, headed by founder Peter Knight on violin, features Roger Flack on guitar, Sacha Trochet on drums, Hannah Martin on violin, banjo and tenor guitar, Philip Henry on Dobro and harmonica and John Spiers on melodeon. A unique force in British folk music, Gigspanner's high-energy, virtuosic performances appeal equally to traditionalists and to those looking for something more experimental, characterised by inventiveness, brilliant individual playing and subtle collaborative interaction.

The year-round Jazz by the Sea programme brings Talking Spirits to the Marine on Sunday 26th. Formerly known as the James Lascelles Quartet, the band plays a unique blend of world jazz. These



Ensemble Augelletti come to Bridport, Ilminster and Crewkerne in April

highly respected London-based session musicians have an eclectic repertoire, inspired by influences from around the world, including jazz, folk and Anglo/Caribbean grooves.

Baroque ensemble on tour

CONCERTS IN THE WEST

THE April tour of Concerts in the West features Ensemble Augelletti, specialists in the music of the 17th and 18th centuries. The three concerts begin with the usual coffee-time recital at Bridport Arts Centre at 11.30am on Friday 10th April, with 7.30pm concerts at Ilminster Arts Centre that evening, and at Crewkerne Dance House on Saturday 11th.

Founded in 2019, the ensemble—Olwen Foulkes, recorders, Ellen Bundy, violin, Carina Drury, cello, Toby Carr, lute, and Benedict Williams, harpsichord—specialises in baroque chamber music, creating engaging programmes that tell the everyday stories of people living in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The musicians are known for compelling performances that demonstrate an “equal capacity for elegant pathos and rip-roaring technical dexterity” (The Arts Desk, 2024) and are often praised for their profound understanding of their innovative repertoire.


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Alanis Morissette headlines at Powderham Castle along with Lewis Capaldi for an open air spectacular in June

Ensemble Augelletti are a BBC New Generation Baroque Ensemble (2023-25) and City Music Foundation Artists (2024-26). They perform regularly on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune and Early Music* and in arts festivals across the UK including York, London, Brighton, Beverley Early Music festivals.

They were finalists at the York International Young Artist Competition and released their debut CD recording, entitled *The Library of a Prussian Princess*, on Barn Cottage Records in 2022. Their year-long digital project, *Pick a Card*, explored historical playing cards from the British Museum's collection.

The programme for their Concerts in the West series is *Jewels that Brightly Burn*, taken from Telemann's description of Bach's students—Telemann championed Bach's skill in arranging music to inspire a new generation of musicians as they performed "under the orange tree," in Leipzig. This programme tells the story of Bach's students as they became "jewels" and includes arrangements of his joyous instrumental music alongside Telemann's stunning Paris quartets and suites by Pisendel.

[Lewis Capaldi at Powderham](#) EXETER

LEWIS Capaldi heads the list of performers in the open air at Powderham Castle near Exeter in late June. International star Capaldi has two gigs in the spectacular Devon setting, on 27th and 28th June.

The other headliners are Grammy-nominated singer Teddy Swims with his band Freak Freely and special guests, on 25th June, and the seven-times Grammy-winner Alanis Morissette. This is one of just five UK dates for the brilliant American singer.

[The Mexico Mission](#) DORCHESTER AND TOURING

DORSET-based community interest company Brave Bold Drama is back at Dorchester with a colourful and quirky detective comedy, *The Mexico Mission*, on tour and coming to Dorchester Arts at the Corn Exchange on Friday 10th April at 2pm.

Could you crack a million-dollar case? When a new Frida Kahlo painting is discovered in Mexico City, art

detectives Agents Kahlo and Dali of the Company of International Artists, a top secret art detective agency, are summoned by the buyer to prove exactly who painted the portrait. And there's room in their crew for you!

However, once back in her home town of Mexico City, glimpses of Agent Kahlo's past, and her previous work partner, the mysterious Agent Modotti, start to bubble to the surface, leaving Agent Dali wondering who he can trust.

Featuring a broad streak of quirky comedy, packed with playful film-noir references and inspired by the art of Frida Kahlo, *The Mexico Mission* is an adventure for the whole family.

Other local dates on the spring tour by the company, which is based at Preston, Weymouth, are: Poole Lighthouse, 9th April 2pm, and Exeter Phoenix arts centre, 14th April, 1.30pm.



Samuel Beckett's Krapp's Last Tape comes to Dorchester in April

[An old man looks back](#) DORCHESTER

LAST year, the multi-award-winning film actor Gary Oldman returned to the stage, to the theatre where he first performed in York, to perform Samuel Beckett's solo masterpiece *Krapp's Last Tape*. This year he is back reprising the role in London, while another veteran actor, David Westhead, takes on the challenge, in a new production coming to Dorchester Corn Exchange on Thursday 16th April at 7.30pm.

Krapp's Last Tape is a journey through an old man's

life, filled with hilarious memories and hopes for the future, coupled with the mourning of lost love and unfulfilled ambition.

Haunting, darkly funny, rambling, sometimes perplexing, the play is an exploration of memory, regret and lost ambition. In some ways, nothing happens. (You can, of course, say the same of Beckett's other great masterpiece, *Waiting For Godot*). But if you simply sit back and let Krapp's words and the old tapes draw you in, it becomes oddly celebratory as well as deeply sad.

This touring production stars David Westhead, a familiar face from countless television dramas and series, and a regular member of both the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre. It is directed by Academy Award nominee Stockard Channing.

[Poetry gigs in East Devon](#) SEATON AND AXMINSTER

POETRY gigs attract big audiences these days, and Devon's Villages in Action has two exciting events coming up, at Seaton on Friday 10th April and Axminster on Friday 17th.

Northern Irish comedian and former Bard of Exeter, Edward Tripp comes to The Old Picture House at Seaton with *No Man is an Ireland*, a surreal, genre-bending, stand-up poetry show. Ed ponders his cultural identity through the mediums of story-telling and prop-heavy stand-up poetry.

The show, which begins at 8pm, features defrosted wives, visits from Uncle Connor (who isn't in the IRA) and at least one unforgettable tribute to the late Lady Diana. If you enjoy spoken-word poetry, this is the show for you. If you dislike spoken-word poetry, this is probably the show for you too. Expect the unexpected ... and hold on tight.

On Friday 17th at 7.30pm at The Tiffin Box in Axminster's Trinity Square, Liv Torc will explore life, love and relationships, in *Wild Words for Wet Days*. The performance will make you laugh, move you and hopefully inspire you to reconsider our relationship to the environment and the crazy world we live in.

[Fred is back](#) DORCHESTER

HIJINX Theatre, one of Europe's leading inclusive theatre companies, is coming to the Corn Exchange with Dorchester Arts on Thursday 9th April, with *Meet Fred*, marking the tenth anniversary of this darkly funny satire, following the experiences of Fred, a puppet fighting for his independence as his Puppetry Living Allowance comes under threat.

After ten years, 20-plus countries and countless laughs, *Meet Fred* is back. Created and performed by

an inclusive ensemble of disabled and non-disabled artists, this is the story of a two-foot-tall puppet, interrogating how society restricts independence for those who don't fit its norms.

Fred is a cloth puppet who wants to live an ordinary life—find love, get a job and be part of society. But when his Puppetry Living Allowance is threatened, his world begins to unravel. Blending dark humour, mesmerising puppetry and sharp political commentary, *Meet Fred* offers a subversive examination of bureaucracy, disability rights and what it means to be human. More than a decade after its premiere, the show remains urgently relevant, reflecting ongoing debates and budget cuts surrounding inclusion, independence and disability rights.

Since 2016, *Meet Fred* has toured extensively across the UK and internationally, to more than 20 countries across Europe, Asia and North America. The play features three exceptional learning disabled and/or autistic performers from Welsh company Hijinx, who devised the production, along with puppetry experts Blind Summit, to demonstrate the power of inclusive collaboration and the creative impact of lived experience.

Meet Fred is also at Taunton Brewhouse on 7th April.

[Antique expert's VC talk](#)

BRIDPORT

ANYONE who watches the BBC's long-running *Antiques Roadshow* is sure to have been impressed with the deep knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm of military historian Mark Smith, who is coming to the Electric Palace at Bridport on Wednesday 15th April.

Mark, a man who can read a line of medals like most of us can read a newspaper headline, will be talking on the theme, *For Valour: The Story of the Victoria Cross*.

For the audience, this is a chance to appreciate Mark's expertise and passion live on stage, joining him on an unforgettable journey through courage, sacrifice, and history. His talk will include the origins of the Victoria Cross, debunk some long-standing myths, and feature jaw-dropping stories of the extraordinary heroes who have earned this prestigious honour.

Mark has written five authoritative books on the Great War, cementing his place as a respected voice in military history. Best known as *Antiques Roadshow's* Medals and Militaria expert, captivating audiences since 2014, he is also a globally recognised authority on the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for bravery.

There are two further south west dates later in the year—14th October at Teignmouth Pavilions and 27th November at the Exchange at Sturminster Newton.



The Budapest Cafe Orchestra - a blistering barrage of czardas, East European and Russian folk tunes

[A breath-taking musical journey](#)

TOURING

THE Budapest Cafe Orchestra, with the charismatic violinist Christian Garrick, is on tour this spring, with local gigs at the David Hall, South Petherton on Saturday 14th March, Sturminster Newton Exchange on Thursday 16th, Dorchester Corn Exchange on Friday 17th and the Mowlem theatre at Swanage on Saturday 18th.

Founded in 2009 by Garrick, a composer and teacher as well as virtuoso fiddler, Budapest Cafe Orchestra plays a whirling, exciting blend of gypsy and folk-flavoured music from all around the world, from heart-rending Jewish melodies to fiery Eastern European dances. They are best known for their energetic arrangements of traditional Balkan, Russian, Hungarian and Romanian traditional music with jazz nuances and their own unique arrangements.

A reviewer for the Brighton Argus said: "The Budapest Cafe Orchestra play a blistering barrage of czardas, East European and Russian folk tunes that might have come from the Hot Club of Paris via the Orient Express!"

The tour continues in May including dates at Ilminster Arts Centre on Thursday 7th and Honiton Beehive on Friday 8th.

[The power of play](#)

DORCHESTER

JUGGLING clown Darryl Carrington brings his one-man show *Out of the Box* to Dorchester Corn Exchange on Sunday 26th April, at the family-friendly time of 3pm.

Trained at Bristol's Circomedia School of Contemporary Circus and Physical Theatre, Darryl has more than two decades of experience making people, laugh, wonder and play, creating, producing, and performing unique comedy juggling shows around the world.

He says: "Whether I'm centre-stage in a full-length show like *Out of the Box*, hosting a cabaret act or



Sarah McQuaid plays at Bridport Town Hall in April

leading a workshop, my aim is always the same: to surprise, delight and remind us all of the power of PLAY.”

Out of the Box is described as a joyful circus-comedy bursting with surprises. Using non-verbal clowning, trick shots and audience participation, Darryl transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary.

[Sarah McQuaid is back..](#) **BRIDPORT AND TOURING**

SINGER-songwriter Sarah McQuaid is back in Dorset, performing at Bridport Town Hall on Friday 10th April, following dates with Artsreach in January. The new gig, part of a lengthy tour, which includes Teignmouth Pavilions on 8th April, will feature songs from the new album that she will be recording at her home studio in the far west of Cornwall.

“Settle down, and I’ll try to make a soothing sound,” Sarah McQuaid sings in the opening number of her current concert set. And so she does, starting off a cappella, then layering acoustic and electric guitars, floor tom drum, keyboards and lush vocal

harmonies, using looping technology to create a gentle, organic progression.

The set mainly features Sarah’s original compositions, spanning a wide range of styles from contemplative ballads to playful blues to atmospheric instrumentals, but she also includes folk songs, evergreen classics and even a few contemporary covers. As well as the beautiful songs, the show is enhanced by spectacular lighting effects created by Martin Stansbury, her manager and sound engineer.

Born in Spain, raised in Chicago and now living in Cornwall, after many years in Ireland, Sarah is as multinational as she is multitalented. The local dates are part of a marathon 67-venue tour throughout the UK, including Wales and the Scottish Highlands, and Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands.

She will also be working hard on her new album. She says: “I’m so incredibly grateful to all the crowdfunding contributors who helped to make the studio possible. There’s no way I could be performing some of the new material live in concert without having had the space to rehearse it in.”



Screen Time with Nic Jeune

Top Six at the Flix

It is April and that means only one thing in the filmgoer's diary... From Page to Screen 2026. Curated by Bridport's very own screen wizard Chris Chibnall! He has chosen some truly great films such as the amazing *2001 Space Odyssey* that has to be seen on a big screen. Here is a selection from the festival.

Bridport Arts Centre

Touch of Evil (1958) - 22nd April @ 10.45 am. 'Touch of Evil proceeds with one of the most celebrated long-takes in screen history. The sequence is a marvel of technical virtuosity and staged action. From the very start, Orson Welles's grubby and sweaty noir classic has us in its grip with a gloriously devised piece of showmanship emblematic of the director's audaciously talented spirit.' Cine Vue.

Tell No One - 22nd April @ 2.15 pm. 'Thrillers aren't ways so thrilling, but *Tell No One* is.' Wall Street Journal. Joe Morgenstern

Rashomon (1950) - 23rd April @ 10.45am. 'Kurosawa is always worth a look, but this is a particular classic that has influenced so much to come, it's almost essential.' Empire Kim Newman

His Girl Friday (1940) - 24th April @ 10.45 am. 'Quite simply a masterpiece.' Time Out. Geoff Andrew

Black Orpheus (1959) - 26th April @ 5pm. 'A film that art-house audiences in 1959 loved madly. And who can blame them? A buoyant, searingly colorful retelling of the Orpheus and Eurydice myth set in Rio de Janeiro, writer-director's Marcel Camus' movie is a romance heightened by its backdrop.' Chicago Tribune. Michael Wilmington

The General (1926) - 26th April @ 8pm. 'Made barely three decades after the invention of film itself, Buster Keaton's timeless 1926 silent *The General* is the perfect chase movie: it has never been bettered, and maybe never will.' Time Out.

Sarah has further dates in early summer, on 5th June at CREDITON Arts Centre, 12th June at Holy Trinity Church at Westward Ho!, 19th June at Parracombe Village Hall, and 2nd July at Torquay's Fougou Music venue.

[Brazil comes to Dorset](#)

BRIDPORT

THE exciting, energetic spirit of Brazil comes to Bridport Arts Centre on Friday 1st May with Zubieta and the Suaves, a six-piece band fronted by the captivating singer, Marta Zubieta.

The band weaves a rich tapestry of bossa nova, Afro-Brazilian samba and Latin jazz—blending golden-age classics with fresh contemporary flair. Their sound echoes the elegance of the 1950s-70s Brazilian music scene while embracing the freedom of improvisation and the warmth of deep musical chemistry.

With multicultural roots and a shared passion for rhythm and soul, the band creates a unique atmosphere that draws listeners in wherever they perform. The line-up is Marta Zubieta, vocals, Sol Ahmed, bass, Susana Gutarr, percussion, Anto Muñoz, piano, Ben Glass, sax, and Paolo Adamo, drums.

[Looking for trouble](#)

DORCHESTER

THE wry Irish comedian Dylan Moran is currently touring a stand-up show called *Looking For Trouble*. He is stopping off at Dorchester Comedy Club at Thomas Hardy School Theatre on Saturday 25th April.

The county town's comedy club has established a reputation for top-quality stand-up, featuring a hand-picked line-up of TV names, award-winners and rising stars.

Born in County Meath in 1971, Dylan Moran is also a writer, actor and artist. He is best-known for his observational comedy, the comedy series *Black Books* (which he co-wrote and starred in), and his work with Simon Pegg in films such as *Shaun of the Dead* and *Run Fatboy Run*. He was also one of two lead characters in the Irish black comedy film *A Film with Me in It*.

He is a regular performer at national and international comedy festivals including the Edinburgh Fringe, Just for Laughs Montreal Comedy Festival, the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, and the Kilkenny Comedy Festival.

[Puppets in Wonderland](#)

HONITON

LEWIS Carroll's magical classic has been adapted in so many ways for audiences of all ages—on screen, television, stage, pantomime—and puppets. Theatrix Arts comes to the Beehive Centre at Honiton, on Tuesday 7th April at 2pm, with a colourful new show, *Wonderland*.

Welcome to the *Wonderland Hat Shop!* Join the Hatter as he brings Alice's adventure to life with charming puppets, vibrant painted scenery, lively music and, of course, hats!

Along the way, you'll meet delightful and quirky creatures, sing along to catchy tunes and have a blast doing the lobster dance. It's a whimsical adventure you won't want to miss! At the end of the journey meet the puppets and make a White Rabbit or Alice puppet.

The show runs for 55 minutes and is followed by a one-hour workshop.

[Rare chance to hear folk band](#)

HONITON

THE Beehive Centre at Honiton has one of the very few gigs this year by Praying for the Rain, an international folk collective, on Friday 17th April at 7.30pm.

Expect an unforgettable night of uplifting folk and world music with the four original members, Domenic DeCicco, Vince DeCicco, Delagh King and Mal Darwen playing songs from a selection of all their albums and recent solo projects, as well as music from their latest release entitled, *Celebrate*.

Known for their dynamic and compelling live performances, their music blends contemporary folk and roots, with beautifully crafted harmonies, melodies and rhythms that create an intriguing tapestry of acoustic ambience and inspired musicianship. The four musicians will be using a wide range of instruments, including acoustic guitars, accordion, mandolin, bodhran, Native American flutes, voice and percussion,

During their musical history together, they have travelled throughout Europe, Canada, Africa and the Middle East and have performed at festivals such as Glastonbury, Womad, Cambridge, Stainsby, Frome, at the famous Spiegeltent during the Islington International festival and at London's Union Chapel and South Bank as part of a world music series presented by the National Theatre.

[Sci-fi laughs and chills](#)

LYME REGIS AND TOURING

THE Invisible Man, one of HG Wells' best-known stories, and the novel that earned him the reputation as the father of science fiction, comes to the Marine Theatre at Lyme Regis on Wednesday 8th April, in a new comedy thriller adaptation by the Herefordshire-based Our Star Theatre Company.

The idea of invisibility and the advantages it could bring to someone has captured the imagination of millions since HG Wells' classic story was first published in 1897. *The Invisible Man* has been adapted many times for film, but rarely for the stage.

This original, fast-paced and riotous adaptation boasts 15 characters, played by just three energetic actors, aided by quick and silly costume changes, prop manipulation, whacky imagination and tons of tongue-in-cheek fun!

The production is on a long spring tour, with further dates in our region at: Swanage Mowlem Theatre on 24th April, Tiverton Community Arts on 25th, the Palace Theatre, Paignton on 29th, The Flavel at Dartmouth on 1st May, Sidmouth Manor Pavilion on 2nd May, Wimborne's Tivoli Theatre on 7th May, the Shaftesbury Theatre at Dawlish on 16th May, and the Barbican Theatre at Plymouth on 21st May.,

GPW

The Young Lit Fix

The House With Chicken Legs Runs Away

By **Sophie Anderson**

Illustrated by Elisa Paganelli

Cover illustration by Melissa Castrillon

Published by Usborne. Paperback £8.99

Reviewed by Nicky Mathewson

A HOUSE with chicken legs is a very special thing. With the help of a Baba Yaga it guides the dead safely from the land of the living through a gate to the stars. During the guiding the dead are treated with a feast of home cooked food and encouraged to share their stories and sing songs, celebrating their lives, before passing through the gate to become part of the wider universe.

Marinka grew up in the house with chicken legs and helps Yaga Tatyana to guide the dead, also with the help of her best friends Benjamin and Jack, the crow.

Marinka loves the house dearly and the house loves her back but it starts to act very strangely and the once soft vines that grow from the rafters have become thorny and painful.

Marinka is very worried about the house and tries to coax the problem out of it but the house clams up.

She decides the best thing to do, to give the house a boost, would be to hold a guiding for the dead which would give the house energy and restore everyone's spirits.

This time, however, the gate to the stars behaves inexplicably, exploding outward and sucking all the dead through and then threatening to suck Marinka, Benjamin, Tatyana and Jack through as well! This catastrophe sets the house sprinting off into the woods throwing everyone out as it does. Marinka runs to keep up, desperate not to lose her house, Benjamin and Jack in hot pursuit.

Can Marinka catch the troubled house and can she find what it needs to restore itself and to fix the growing void that the gate has created inside the house?

Action packed magical adventure with moral questions set in a landscape that is influenced by Prussian folk lore. Sophie Anderson is a master story teller and I loved this story!

I highly recommend it to emerging and confident readers aged 8+

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