

Just when you thought it was behind you... IT'S PANTO TIME AGAIN!

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PANTOMIME— it's hardly behind you and it's in front of you again! Now November is here, it really is time to make your choice of show and stars and book your tickets.

The big productions in the south west are at Plymouth, where Lesley Joseph and Rob Rinder are leading the cast of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, Weymouth, where *Peter Pan* is flying in for Christmas, Exeter Northcott, which hosts the only *Cinderella* in the region, and Yeovil, where a new company will be taking to the stage of Westlands while the refurbishment of the Octagon continues. *Beauty and the Beast* is on at Weston Super Mare and *Pinocchio* at Taunton Brewhouse.

If you are enjoying the new look *Amazing Hotels* with Monica Galetti and Rob Rinder, you will be able to see him as the face in the mirror, telling Lesley (Dorien from *Birds of a Feather*) Joseph that she's the fairest in the land ... until Snow White takes over her position. The show runs from 13th December to 7th January at the Lyric Theatre Royal at Plymouth, with lots of matinees for all the family.

At Westlands in Yeovil from 13th December to 5th January, an all-new cast and company will take on the mantle of Evolution Pantomimes to perform a new version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Mark Lamb is Jack Trott, with Alana Robinson as Fairy Motown, and Daniel Page as Dame Trott in this home-grown production from a team responsible for memorable Christmas shows in recent years, at the Octagon and last year at Westlands.

The Croc is ticking at Weymouth Pavilion for *Peter Pan*, on stage from 20th December to 5th January. Jamie Riding will be donning the petticoats as Mrs Smee, with BGT star Tony Rudd as her son, Smee. The identity of Captain Hook is yet to be disclosed ...

Exeter's Northcott Theatre has the city-based Le Navet Bete performing the much-loved story of *Cinderella* from 28th November to 5th January, promising a new look pantomime and fun for all the family.



*Pictured: Daniel Page and Alana Robinson,
Jamie Riding from Weymouth and Rob Rinder and Lesley Joseph from Plymouth.*



November

PREVIEW



Stand up comedian and professional cricket statistician Andy Zaltzman will be in Bridport in November

Feeling the Zaltgeist.

BRIDPORT

SATIRICAL comedian and presenter of BBC Radio 4's *News Quiz* Andy Zaltzman is on an autumn tour, coming to Bridport's Electric Palace on Saturday 23rd November at 8pm. In the cleverly titled *Zaltgeist*, Andy will attempt to concoct vaguely plausible answers to perennial questions such as What?, Who?, Where?, and above all Why?

As chairman of *The News Quiz* since 2020, Andy has brought his inventive brand of satirical comedy to BBC Radio 4's long-running flagship topical comedy show, earning the show multiple awards, critical acclaim and a growing listenership.

Among his extraordinary achievements, Andy is (apparently) unquestionably among the very best of the one-person list of Satirical Stand-Up Comedians Who Are Also Professional Cricket Statisticians. Since 2016, he has been a key member of the Test

Match Special team, adding his distinctive blend of knowledge, expertise, humour and numerical inquisitiveness to the BBC's legendary cricket broadcast.

Celebrating a great Dorset polymath

STURMINSTER NEWTON

MOST people who know the name of William Barnes will think of him as the poet of the old Dorset dialect, the writer of *Linden Lea*, and a near-contemporary of a more famous Dorset literary star, Thomas Hardy. But who was the real Barnes? Historian, musician and actor Tim Laycock is performing his play, *The Year Clock*, with his regular collaborator, folk fiddler Colin Thompson, at Sturminster Newton Exchange on Sunday 3rd November at 3pm. Tim has revived his 2001 play to raise funds for the cataloguing and digitising of the William Barnes Archive



Berkeley Ensemble coming to Bridport Arts Centre in November. Photo Liz Isles.

The Year Clock: A Celebration of Language, History, and the Life of William Barnes, which has also been staged in Dorchester, is a poignant and vivid celebration of the remarkable life of William Barnes, who is not only one of Dorset's most beloved literary figures, but also a true polymath. Barnes (1801–1886) was a self-educated teacher, parson and poet, renowned for his works in the Dorset dialect, including *Linden Lea*, later set to music by Ralph Vaughan Williams. But perhaps his greatest claim to fame was his passion for philology - he studied more than 60 languages in his quest to uncover the roots of human speech. He considered this work to be his greatest legacy—his *Philological Grammar* remains a vital contribution to the field.

Tim Laycock's play brings Barnes' life to the stage, drawing on his notes, letters and contemporary accounts sourced from the William Barnes Archive, which is currently held in the Dorset History Centre. The play is structured around the four seasons, symbolising key stages in Barnes' life, and features poems and songs composed between 1835 and 1870. The final piece, *The Geate a-Vallen To*, was dictated by Barnes to his daughter shortly before he died in 1886.

Accompanied by traditional Dorset folk music performed by Colin Thompson on violin and guitar, the production delves into Barnes' inner conflict as a highly educated man who chose to write in the rural Dorset dialect, offering a moving exploration of the tension between Victorian England's industrialisation

and the fading rural way of life.

Described by Thomas Hardy as “the most interesting link between the past and present forms of rural life that England possessed,” and by Francis Kilvert as “half hermit, half enchanter,” Barnes left a legacy that remains deeply rooted in England's rural traditions and social transformations.

This revival is hosted in collaboration with the William Barnes Society, and is supporting the Barnes for All! campaign, raising funds to preserve Barnes' rich archive at the Dorset History Centre.

[Making music in new ways](#) CONCERTS IN THE WEST

THE November series of Concerts in the West brings the Berkeley Ensemble to Bridport Arts Centre on Friday 15th for the usual coffee concert, at 11.30am, and Ilminster Arts Centre that evening at 7.30pm. The last of the series, and the final concert in the 2024 programme, is at Crewkerne's Dance House on Saturday 16th at 7.30pm.

The Berkeley Ensemble come together from diverse corners of musical life, to make music in new ways and to reach new audiences. The line up is: Sophie Mather, Francesca Baritt and Dan Shilladay, violins; Gemma Wareham, cello, Martin Ludenbach, double bass, John Slack, clarinet, Andrew Watson, bassoon and Paul Cott, horn.

The group was formed by friends in a spirit of adventure, sharing a desire to explore new repertoire,

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be it newly written or inadvertently forgotten. Its acclaimed performances and recordings celebrate contemporary chamber music, especially by British composers.

There have been nine albums, which include 18 premiere recordings among a diverse catalogue ranging from Knussen to Beethoven. The ensemble regularly appears at venues and festivals throughout the UK including Southbank Centre's Purcell Room, St David's Hall Cardiff, Wiltshire Music Centre and the Cheltenham, Spitalfields, and Lake District Summer Music Festivals.

Away from the concert platform, the Berkeley Ensemble works tirelessly to foster the creation, appreciation and performance of chamber music at every age, level and ability.

The programme for the November tour will be Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (arranged for string quintet and Howard Ferguson's Octet (at Bridport) with an additional work, Schubert's *Octet* at the evening venues.

Favourites at The Old School House. TINCLETON

THE beautiful living room at The Old School House in Tincleton is not only architecturally interesting, with fine windows, but it is home to not one but two beautiful grand pianos. They will be put to good use over the weekend of Friday 15th and Saturday 16th November, when old favourites John Law and David Gordon return to give a recital.

On the Friday, John Law, a brilliant improviser, composer and jazz pianist, joins the versatile David Gordon to play a mixture of solos and duos—expect jazz and Latin music, classically themed improvisation and original compositions from these two award-winning musicians.

On Saturday, David Gordon will introduce a talented Somerset-based multi-instrumentalist, Jenny Bliss Bennett. She specialises in violin, viola da gamba and is a brilliant improviser across many styles. Together David and Jenny will play a wide range of music from William Byrd to Mozart, folk tunes ancient and modern and more—with the focus on joyous improvisation. Both concerts begin at 8pm.

This year's Tincleton series ends on the weekend 13th-15th December with another audience favourite,

the Dorset-based pianist Duncan Honeybourne, who will give a programme of piano classics.

WOW in the House of Fun. WEYMOUTH

WEYMOUTH's talented musical group WOW Youth Musical Theatre have chosen the Madness musical, *Our House*, for their autumn production at the Pavilion from Wednesday 13th to Saturday 16th November at 7pm with a Saturday matinee at 2pm.

The Olivier Award-winning show, by Tim Firth (of *Calendar Girls* fame) with its invitation "Welcome to the House of Fun!" features a string of Madness hits, including *House of Fun*, *Baggy Trousers*, *Driving in my Car*, *It Must Be Love* and *Our House*.

Set in 1980s London, *Our House* follows the story of Joe Casey who, on the night of his 16th birthday, makes a decision that will change his life. Trying to impress Sarah, the girl of his dreams, he breaks into a building, where things take a turn for the worse as the police turn up. The story then follows the two paths that Joe could take after that night.

The show is directed and choreographed by Martyn Knight, whose previous shows with WOW have included *Sister Act* (2014) and *Me and My Girl* (2017), which won the NODA district achievement award.

After Ionesco. BRIDPORT

ONE of the greatest avant-garde writers of the post-war period was the French experimental dramatist, Eugene Ionesco. And one of his best-known plays, *Rhinoceros*, is the inspiration for an event at Bridport's Lyric Theatre on Saturday 9th November at 8pm.

Dorset-based Stray Dog Jammers will perform *Rhino*, adapted from Ionesco's powerful absurdist drama which was a response to the upsurge of Fascism in the 1930s.

Rhino explores the themes of conformity, culture, responsibility, logic, mass movements, mob mentality, philosophy and morality—all still highly relevant in today's world. Its central character, Berenger, the non-conformist, is the only one not to capitulate to the herd mentality—and the only one not to metamorphosise into a rhinoceros.

The performance is part of this year's Bridport Literary Festival.



*New production of War Horse in Plymouth
Photo by Brinkhoff-Moegenburg*

New production of War Horse. PLYMOUTH

THE brilliant and award-winning National Theatre production of *War Horse*, adapted from Michael Morpugo's novel, was a massive hit at the National, in the West End, on Broadway and around the world. Now a new production of this beautiful and deeply moving story is on a national tour, coming to Plymouth Theatre Royal, from 26th November to 7th December.

War Horse is an unforgettable theatrical experience which takes audiences on an extraordinary journey from the fields of rural Devon to the trenches of First World War France. Powerfully emotional and stunningly imaginative, the drama is filled with stirring music and songs.

It is a celebration of phenomenal theatrical inventiveness. At its heart are astonishing life-sized horses created by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company, who bring breathing, galloping, charging horses to thrilling life on stage.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Joey, young Albert's beloved horse, is sold to the Cavalry and shipped to France. He's soon caught up in enemy fire and fate takes him on an extraordinary journey, serving on both sides before finding himself alone in No Man's Land. Albert, who remained on his parents' Devon farm, cannot forget Joey. Though still not old enough to enlist, he embarks on a treacherous mission to find Joey and bring him home.

The production is returning to the West Country next year, at Bristol Hippodrome from 3rd to 21st June.

Fort—a play about Dorset. DORCHESTER AND TOURING

DORSET has a lot of Iron Age hill forts. Locally-based theatre company Dorsetborn is touring a highly praised new play that uses this atmospheric setting for a play that asks deep questions about the meaning of friendship. The tour begins at the Allendale Centre in Wimborne on Sunday 10th November, is at Dorchester Corn Exchange on Tuesday 12th and has two Artsreach dates, Langton Matravers village hall on Wednesday 13th and Ibberton village hall on Saturday 16th. (Other dates below).

Away from dysfunctional families and small-town gossip, Viv and Daisy can be entirely themselves. With so much beyond their control, *Fort* is their stomping ground ... their escape ... until the ghost turns up.

Best friends for as long as they can remember, their bond has survived school bullies, witchcraft, jealousy and vengeful cows. But at the end of a summer when everything is changing, can it survive the ghost?

Dorsetborn is an associate company of the National Youth Theatre, and creates new work across Dorset and the South West. *Fort* is Tabitha Hayward's debut play, inspired by the people and places around us, about two girls who'd do anything for each other. Originally drafted on a Royal Court Introductory Group, *Fort* was long-listed for the Bruntwood Prize 2022 and shortlisted for the Masterclass Pitch Your Play Award.

Other Dorset dates for the tour are Poole Lighthouse on Thursday 21st November, Palace Court Theatre, Bournemouth, on Friday 22nd and the Ancient Technology Centre, Cranborne, on Saturday 23rd.

Music at the Marine. LYME REGIS

FROM a much-loved folk "big band" to a veteran of the UK's urban music scene, the November programme of live music at the Marine Theatre in Lyme Regis is varied and exciting. The first date is Blazin' Fiddles on Friday 8th November.

One of the world's most prolific fiddle groups, the band formed for a one-off tour of the Scottish Highlands in 1999 and is still raising hell—and the roof—more than two decades later. Encompassing a rare and virtuosic selection of the fiddle's diverse Highland and island voices, with ensemble and solo-led sets, backed by powerhouse guitar and piano,



Top Six at the Flix

Bridport Electric Palace

***The Outrun* (2024)**

Amy Liptrot's astonishing debut memoir *The Outrun* is a brutally honest tale of inglorious addiction in hipster-central Hackney, and a lyrical meditation on the long path to recovery after she washes up back home on the clifftops of Orkney "The *Outrun* is the rare two-hour movie that made me forget to check the time." The Guardian. Adrian Horton.

***Transformers One* (2024)**

"*Transformers One* is simply good storytelling. It offers detail, solid action, and narrative depth that longtime fans will appreciate while being a nice entry point for those who are newer to the world of Transformers." Screen Rant Mae Abdulbaki.

Plaza Cinema. Dorchester

***Paddington in Peru* (2024)**

"Here's something feel-good to get into, as that cheeky, amusing bear returns once again" Critical Popcorn. Dan Bullock.

***Gladiator 2* (2024)**

"The original *Gladiator* was a major hit, winning five Academy Awards. ... Return to the sands of Rome after two decades as a new hero rises in Ridley Scott's *Gladiator 2*" The Moviesz.com

Odeon Dorchester

***Anora* (2024)**

"Baker's subversively romantic, free-wheeling sex farce makes "*Pretty Woman*" look like a Disney movie." Variety. Peter Debruge.

***Conclave* (2024)**

"*Conclave* is packed with unexpected twists and its final reveal is one viewers will never see coming, an increasingly rare occurrence in modern movie-making and the mark of an impeccably crafted thriller." Entertainment Weekly. Maureen Lee Lenker.

the Blazers combine all the power, passion and sensitivity of Scotland's traditional music.

On Saturday 9th, Huey Morgan, radio and television broadcaster, author and DJ, comes to Lyme Regis. He came to prominence as the driving force of the eclectic American rap/rock group Fun Lovin' Criminals, and led the band from 1993 to 2021. The band released six albums and sold more than 10 million records.

Adam Sweet's rootsy rock and Joanna Cooke's bluesy soul promise an electrifying night of music on Sunday 10th. Both are well-known on the West Country music scene and are now achieving national recognition for their song-writing, recordings and live performances.

The seven-piece band Hejira come to Lyme Regis on Friday 15th with a Celebration of Joni Mitchell, playing the greatest works of the brilliant Canadian singer-songwriter.

The following night, Saturday 16th, the Marine welcomes General Levy, a veteran of the UK urban music scene, and still one of the country's most in-demand MCs. He grew up in a community heavily influenced by reggae music and black culture and from an early age, a certain militancy was instilled in him along with a love and respect for rebel music.

The month ends with another show dedicated to one of the folk scene's great women, the late Sandy Denny, the lead singer with Fairport Convention who died in 1978 at the tragically early age of 31 from head injuries after falling down a flight of stairs. *The Sandy Denny Project*, at the Marine on Thursday 28th November, celebrate her ever-growing reputation, both as a songwriter and interpreter of traditional material.

[Little Red Riding Hood ...](#)

BRIDPORT



Little Red Riding Hood comes to Bridport Arts Centre on November 2nd

WHY did Red Riding Hood need a man to rescue her from the wolf? Why do we know her by an article of clothing rather than her real name? Why are the victims of the story all women? What would Little Red Riding Hood do if she could? And what is stopping her? In an imaginative new play for children and families, coming to Bridport Arts Centre on Saturday 2nd November at 2pm, Bristol-based Roustabout Theatre takes the audience on an exhilarating journey through a story you thought you knew.

Little Red Riding Hood imagines how this and other familiar fairy tales we share with children might be different if we dared to ask these vital questions.

Written and directed by Roustabout's artistic director Toby Hulse, with

original songs and music by Robin Hemmings, *Little Red Riding Hood* dares audiences to step off the path and write their own story—what would you do if you could?

Nothing's quite what you'd expect in the deep, dark woods. Little Red Riding Hood is no longer little, she no longer wears a hood and she wants to be called by her real name. She's questioning everything. And so are Mother, the Woodcutter and even the Wolf!

Toby Hulse says the initial idea for the show was developed with two Year One classes in Barnsley and Stockton-on-Tees: "The five and six year olds we worked with had so many clearly articulated opinions and questions." What had started as a play about gender roles developed into "an exploration of how we all respond to the expectations put upon us, as well as encouraging us to be wildly imaginative in the way we told the story."

[Songs from the Isle of Man](#)

HONITON

TOURING for the first time in four years, Christine Collister comes to Honiton's Beehive Centre, on Thursday 21st November, performing songs from her new *Children of the Sea* project of nine original songs inspired by Manx folklore and a magical sense of place.

Christine's career now spans an incredible 40 years—she has released 24 albums, a DVD celebrating 20 years in the business and a hit single of the theme tune for the hugely acclaimed television adaptation of Fay Weldon's *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil*, in 1987.

The new album links back to her childhood, growing up on the Isle of Man. Following the success of *The Life and Loves Of A She Devil*, she enjoyed a period of great critical and commercial success working with Clive Gregson, followed by a long association with Richard Thompson.

Children Of The Sea is a special project that has been partly funded by the Isle Of Man Arts Council, Culture Vannin and Fledgling Records. The CD comes with a beautiful book complete with lyrics, inspirations and stories with original illustrations by Manx artists.

[Growing up with a chronic illness](#)

DORCHESTER AND TOURING

A THREE-actor, one-woman play coming to Dorchester Arts at the Corn Exchange on Thursday 28th November, explores the challenges for a young woman growing up in the shadow of a chronic illness. *Bright Places*, by Rob Mainwaring, produced by Carbon Theatre, is a darkly funny and deeply honest autobiographical story about multiple sclerosis.

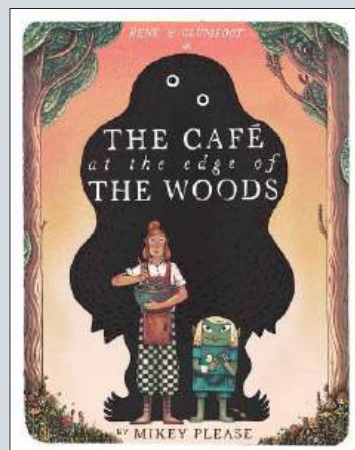
"I was 23 when it came crashing into my life—without warning, when everything was going so well, just when I was really, really happy ..."

Performed by three women, with 90s pop, a costume box and a whole heap of glitter, *Bright Places* lifts the lid on living with multiple sclerosis, MS for short, not to be confused with M&S or S&M.

Carbon Theatre is working with charity partner, Shift.ms which is the digital community for people with MS. Other dates on the tour are: Exeter Northcott Theatre on 13th and 14th November, Barbican Theatre, Plymouth on 16th November, Taunton Brewhouse arts centre on 12th December and Crediton Arts Centre on 13th December.

GPW

The Young Lit Fix



The Cafe at the Edge of the Woods

By Mikey Please

Published by HarperCollins

Paperback £7.99

Review by Nicky Mathewson

*"Rene dreamed of fine cuisine,
And so she saved up every bean,
Then built a building beam by beam...
The cafe at the edge of the woods."*

RENE is a talented new chef creating exquisite plates of food and she has a dream to open her own cafe. She builds her dream at the edge of the woods and awaits her first customers.

First through the door is a huge ogre who requests pickled bats, battered mice and slugs in goo. It would seem her clientele don't care for fine dining and desire something less refined.

Rene begins to think she's made a huge mistake, but Glumfoot the waiter comes up with a plan. You don't want to anger an ogre so he encourages Rene to cook what she loves, while he then tweaks her dishes to resemble the monstrous plates that would make an ogre drool.

This rhyming picture book has all the warmth of a cosy fire in autumn. The richly coloured quirky illustrations really bring the story to life and it's lots of fun to read aloud to children aged 3 years and up. It's also great for independent reading for new readers.

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