

January
PREVIEW





Miss Havisham—the back story.

VILLAGES

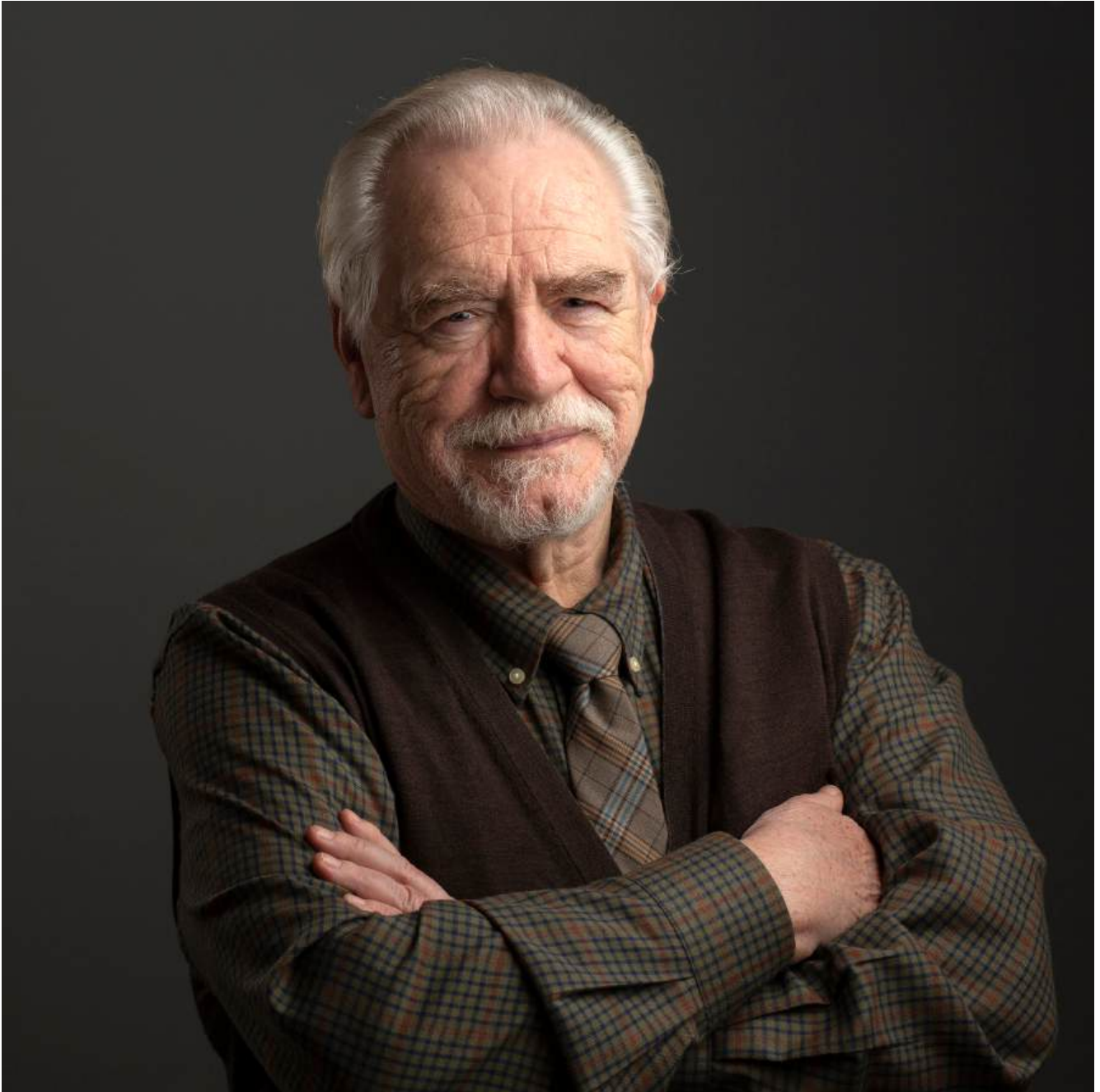
WE all have our picture of Miss Havisham, the jilted bride, bitter in her dark, cobweb-filled mansion, in her ageing wedding dress with the wedding breakfast crumbling on the table ... but what really happened? Actress, writer and producer Heather Alexander brings one of Charles Dickens' iconic characters to life in her one-woman show, coming to Dorset for three dates with Artsreach, from 17th to 19th January.

Havisham, presented by Emul8 Theatre, begins the short tour at Chetnole village hall on Friday 17th, followed by Ibberton on Saturday and Burton Bradstock on Sunday, all beginning at 7.30pm.

The scene is set in 1825. After reliving traumatic memories from her childhood, a young woman, arrives in London, full of hope and ready to embrace a fresh start. However, she soon finds herself as “the leading lady in a drama she can't comprehend.”

The gaslighting is subtle, the manipulation slick. Can Miss Havisham discern her fate? Or is she destined to relive the devastation of her trauma?

This new one-woman play offers a fresh perspective on Dickens' extraordinary Gothic characterisation of Miss Havisham, in *Great Expectations*. We know her as the embodiment of stuck trauma and malignant rage—but how did she arrive at this place and what are the tragic secrets of her calamitous past?



Brian Cox, coming to the Marine Theatre in January

[Succession star comes to Dorset](#)

LYME REGIS

A WORLD-famous Scottish actor is coming to the Marine Theatre at Lyme Regis on 28th January for the launch of a new cinema programme. Brian Cox, most recently and famously the fearsome Logan Roy in *Succession* and star of countless plays, films and television series, will be interviewed on stage and

his film *Manhunter* will be shown, with a chance for audience questions too.

Lyme Regis locals will be familiar with the sad tale of the town's Regent Cinema that burned down in 2016. It was popular with both residents and tourists, so is much missed. After years of fundraising in the community, the Marine Theatre has now purchased cinema equipment, adding film to the long list of

music, theatre and comedy events for which it is well-known across the region. The launch event will be raising funds for the new Marine Theatre Young Filmmakers' course starting this year.

Brian Cox has been acting for six decades, conquering the worlds of stage, television, radio and film, working with many of the leading actors and actresses of our time, including John Gielgud, Laurence Olivier, Meryl Streep and Anthony Hopkins.

Marine Theatre director Gabby Rabbitts says: "We are delighted to announce cinema as the new jewel in the Marine's crown. Over the last three years, we have been hard at work fundraising to offer our local community the very best cinema experience possible without having to travel out of town. Our efforts have now paid off."

The theatre now has a state-of-the-art DCP projector, new comfortable seating, beautiful golden velvet curtains and an enhanced cinema sound system. Details of films will be on the Marine's website, and there will be special cinema events and family films during holiday times.

"We would like to send a heartfelt thanks to all the organisations that have made the Marine Cinema possible," says Gabby. "Our particular thanks to Lyme Regis Town Council, whose generous support, not only of the cinema project but of the Marine throughout the years, has provided the foundation for the Marine Theatre to build upon."

[Tragedy + time = comedy.](#) POOLE AND WEYMOUTH



Ed Byrne coming to Poole and Weymouth

A QUOTE famously attributed to Mark Twain provides the title for Ed Byrne's current tour, which is coming to Poole Lighthouse Theatre on Thursday 16th January and Weymouth Pavilion on Sunday 19th.

One of the UK's favourite television comedians, Ed Byrne has extended his nationwide *Tragedy Plus Time*

tour, winner of British Comedy Guide's Best Comedy Show 2023—and his most personal show to date—until April 2025, almost two years after he began performing it.

Join Ed as he tests Mark Twain's definition of humour as *Tragedy Plus Time*, by mining the most tragic events in his life for laughs.

With his TV career now in its third decade, Ed has appeared on many television shows, including *QI*, *Mock The Week*, *Alan Davies As Yet Untitled*, *The Pilgrimage*, *Dara and Ed's Road to Mandalay*, *Dara & Ed's Big Adventure*, *The Graham Norton Show* and *Have I Got News For You*, as well as hosting *Live At The Apollo* and *Comic Relief Bake Off*.

Known for his passion for the outdoors (hill walking and mountaineering are major hobbies), Ed can be seen turning his presenting skills to factual broadcasting in BBC Two's *Volcano Live*, *World's Most Dangerous Roads* (where he spent two weeks driving through Siberia) and *Into The Wild* with Gordon Buchanan.

[The Lawrence of Arabia mystery.](#) BRIDPORT

ONE of the great mysteries of the inter-world-war period is the death of TE Lawrence—Lawrence of Arabia—in a motorcycle accident not far from his Dorset home at Clouds Hill near Wareham. On Saturday 18th January, Bridport's Electric Palace has a screening of *Who Killed Lawrence of Arabia?*, a feature-length documentary which provides an in-depth investigation into the crash.

The film makers claim that it uncovers compelling evidence that Lawrence's crash was no accident but an assassination. Expert input is provided by historians and investigators Andrew Gough, the Rev Lionel Fanthorpe, Niall Cooper, motorcycle expert Julian Amos, probability expert Paul Swift, writers and TE Lawrence experts Jan Woolf and Mark JT Griffin and senior lecturer in Arab studies Feras Alkabani. The documentary is narrated by Russell Biles.

Based on the non-fiction book, *Who Killed Lawrence of Arabia?*, published in August 2022, the documentary delves deeply into the crash, approaching the death as a murder, and asking who would benefit and who had the means, motive and opportunity to remove Lawrence. The documentary follows the same approach as the book, investigating Lawrence's fatal crash and the aftermath. It reveals a plethora of evidence for an assassination but none for an accident—challenging the official story.

The documentary also strikes a contemporary note, directly connecting Lawrence's military campaign a century ago in the Middle East to the current ongoing conflicts.

But is it ART? DORCHESTER



Somerleigh Players coming to Dorchester Corn Exchange

ONE of the most successful plays of the last 30 years is also one of the most contentious. Some people think it is utterly hilarious—others don't. Indeed, it has a contentious subject—*ART* asks the basic question, Is it ART? Somerleigh Players will be performing Yasmina Reza's hit comedy at Dorchester Corn Exchange on Thursday 9th and Friday 10th January at 7.30pm.

The play is the story of three friends and what happens to their long friendship when one buys a piece of contemporary art—a pristine, all-white painting. Set in Paris, *ART* examines the lives of Serge, Marc and Yvan, and the way their long-standing bond is put to the test when Serge makes his unexpected and unconventional purchase.

What begins as a seemingly trivial debate over contemporary art rapidly spirals into a revealing, often funny and occasionally dark confrontation as the friends grapple with the very essence of art and truth. Will their friendship withstand their clash of views?

ART, an insightful exploration of how passions and perceptions shape our relationships, won Olivier, Tony and Moliere Awards for Best Comedy. Join Rob Sansom, David Lucas and Kevin Morris as they explore the boundaries between art and reality with wit and intelligence in a play as thought-provoking as it is entertaining.

A Viennese New Year WEYMOUTH



Tom Fetherstonhaugh

JOHANN Strauss and his effervescent waltzes andantes are as much part of New Year celebrations as first-footing and *Auld Lang Syne*—the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra brings its annual Viennese celebration tour to Weymouth Pavilion on Wednesday 8th January at 7.30pm, with conductor Tom Fetherstonhaugh and Irish soprano Ava Dodd.

This traditional Viennese Gala celebrates the joyous music of Johann Strauss II and his contemporaries spinning the audience into the New Year with a flourish of favourite waltzes, polkas and marches.

The programme includes Strauss's *Frühlingsstimmen*, *Csardas* from *Die Fledermaus* and *Tritsch-Tratsch Polka*, and Franz Lehar's *Gold and Silver Waltz* and *Vilja* from *The Merry Widow*.

Return of the comedy club HONITON

HONITON's Beehive Centre had such a success with its first comedy club that the event is being repeated by popular demand, with top stand-up Mark Watson coming to the East Devon venue on Saturday 18th January.

The first comedy club show sold out in under 24 hours, and there is likely to be a similar demand to see Mark Watson, one of the UK's most successful comedians, renowned for his sharp wit and engaging humour. His many awards include the Panel Prize at the Edinburgh Fringe and multiple Chortle Awards, while his television credits range from *Taskmaster* and *Live At The Apollo* to *QI* and *Have I Got News For You*.



Bonfire Radicals coming to Drimpton and Portland

The line-up for the evening will feature two additional comedians, ensuring an evening filled with laughter and entertainment.

[Firing up a folk melting pot](#) DRIMPTON AND PORTLAND

BONFIRE Radicals, described as a “proper folk melting pot,” bring their blend of Balkan, African, French, Scandinavian, Irish and British musical influences to Dorset for two dates with Artsreach in January—Friday 10th at Drimpton village hall and Saturday 11th at Portland’s Royal Manor Theatre, both starting at 7.30pm.

With a front line of recorders, fiddle, clarinet and vocals, and a punchy rhythm section of electric guitar, bass and drums, Bonfire Radicals have been delighting audiences across the UK with their vibrant approach to traditional and contemporary folk music.

Their live set captures the adventurous breadth of their musical imagination—an eclectic span of traditional folk music, energetic Irish tunes, Balkan dance and Swedish polskas. French melodies decorate African grooves, delicate English folk song is underscored by heavy metal, klezmer moves through moments of art rock, and Brazilian drumming accompanies snapping Scottish strathspeys.

Released in 2022, Bonfire Radicals’ second album, *The Space Between*, was met with great acclaim and went straight into the UK Folk Charts at 13. Expect intricate originals and inventive arrangements as instrumental fireworks, rich vocal harmonies and delicate a cappella collide.

[From New England in harmony](#) YETMINSTER

THE internationally acclaimed vocal ensemble Windborne travels from New England to Dorset in January, making a welcome return to the Artsreach circuit with *To Warm The Winter Hearth*, showcasing the singers’ powerful and innovative vocal harmonies. The four singers come to Yetminster’s Jubilee Hall on Wednesday 22nd January for a concert beginning at 7.30pm.

With a 20-year background studying polyphony from around the world, Lauren Breunig, Jeremy Carter-Gordon, Lynn Rowan and Will Rowan effortlessly showcase an unrivalled mastery of polyphonic music from diverse cultures. Following the release of their latest album, *To Warm the Winter Hearth*, expect an evening of folklore, magic and mystery as this outstanding group performs welcoming wassails, songs of solstice and music for



Top Six at the Flix 2024

Letterboxd (<https://letterboxd.com/>) the online social cataloguing service launched in 2011 now has over 14 million registered users worldwide. In this selection of my favourite movies of 2024, these are Letterboxd reviewers and the sites weighted ratings out of 5. Anything above 3.5 is a good film. Anything above 4 is great film.

6. Loves Lies Bleeding. (3.6)

This movie is insane- it's way more psychedelic and gore filled than I expected. Acting is great across the board. The character dynamics create amazing tension that builds up well throughout the film. One of my favorites of 2024.

5. All of Us Strangers. (3.9)

One of those movies that get better when you let it sit on your mind for a while. I could see how this is your favorite movie. It has a really unique view on mental health and great acting, while being just as hopeful as tragic.

4. Io Capitano. (3.9)

This is pure Garrone. To go there and make the film as it is, chronicling the journey in their language, with these actors and then be open to Marvel with the oil platform appearing as Sea Monsters, all leading to a phenomenal tenderness the likes no one else would ever dare to imagine in such a story!

3. Radical. (3.9)

Such a delicately crafted story—it defines the essence of feel good as a genre! It arises the question I often wonder and ask myself who are we without education and how many of the world's solutions bears, change makers, and visionaries have existed but were not given a chance? The sad and unfortunate truth is that we do not choose our reality...

2. Zone of Interest. (3.9)

You could hear a pin drop in a packed house. As soon as it was over, I sat in quiet, absolutely distraught. In a decade full with important films, I believe this is one of the most significant, if not the most.

1. Perfect Days. (4.3)

Words cannot describe how perfect the timing of this film is. Two hours of my life I can only say “thank you” for. This film serves as a reminder that there is great value in life. There's a lot to appreciate and there's so much admirable beauty in everyday life.

midwinter, singing in English, Occitan and Lithuanian.

Windborne will also be performing at Blandford parish church on Friday 17th January, also at 7.30pm.

Playing Charlie Parker.

DORCHESTER

THE Neil Maya Quartet, popular across the region through regular gigs, and including tours with Dorset's Artsreach, comes to Dorchester Corn Exchange on Thursday 23rd January, with a show that celebrates one of the greatest jazz musicians ever—the Charlie Parker Story.

Hear the music and life of the great alto saxophonist, one of the most influential jazz musicians of all time, who created a new genre in jazz—bebop—with fast tempos, virtuosic technique and advanced harmonies.

In this new show, saxophonist Neil Maya celebrates some of Charlie's finest compositions as well as some great jazz standards that Charlie brought to prominence. In between numbers Neil will also talk about Charlie's eventful and troubled short life and the influence he had on jazz.

Maya plays in many jazz bands including the Drat Pack, All Jazzed Up, the nationally touring Magnificent Buble and his own quartet. He has been praised for his “electrifying performance with crisp melody lines and improvisation.”

Neil will be accompanied by another Dorset favourite, Philip Clouts, at the piano, with Kevin Sanders on the bass and Gary Evans on the drums. Philip Clouts' international career has included playing at Ronnie Scott's, large festivals such as Glastonbury and Womad, and equally in the plush and intimate surroundings of London's Lanesborough Hotel. Jazzwise magazine has praised his ‘enjoyable, easy swinging’ playing, and his albums have received widespread critical acclaim and national airplay, including on BBC's *Jamie Cullum Show*.

The quartet will be playing many of Charlie's most famous compositions and recordings including *Ornithology*, *Yardbird Suite*, *Now's the Time*, *Blues For Alice* and *Cherokee*.

Chamber music with bells on

VILLAGES



Bowjangles—‘an irreverent, anarchic group of genre-spanners’

IF you think a chamber ensemble is all about serious string quartets and solemn musical introductions, you haven't met Bowjangles. This is the quartet that puts the swing into strings—and they are back in Dorset for concerts at Litton Cheney community hall on Thursday 23rd January,

Lytchett Matravers hall on Friday 24th and Marnhull on Saturday 25th, all at 7.30pm.

Forget everything you think you know about string quartets—Bowjangles is an irreverent, anarchic group of genre-spanners, bringing music, theatre and comedy together in a way you've never seen before.

They are a string quartet who can really play ... they dance while they play ... they sing while they play ... they leap, tumble, juggle and joke while they play!

They are celebrating 16 years of touring by bringing back ALL their best bits, from 2008 to the present day! With musical tennis matches from Bowlympics, Strictly Come Dancing from On The Box and dances with the devil from Excalibow, as well as excerpts from their Edinburgh smash hit *Dracula in Space*, this will be a glorious retrospective of a long-running musical comedy group filled with clever physical comedy and virtuosic music, all interspersed with hilarious stories of their time on the road.

The joy of poetry. VILLAGES

FOR a quarter of a century, poet Luke Wright has built up a reputation as one of Britain's most popular and entertaining performers, winning a host of awards along the way. Now he comes to Dorset with Joy, a new collection of poems, at West Stafford village hall on Friday 31st January, Piddletrenthide Memorial Hall on Friday 1st February and Shipton Gorge village hall on Sunday 2nd, all at 7.30pm.

During his long career, Luke Wright has won an unprecedented four Saboteur Awards, a Stage Award and a Fringe First. He has sold out shows across the world and regularly tours with John Cooper Clarke as well as The Libertines.

Following the smash hit success of his Silver Jubilee show ("the best thing he's done and that's saying something"—Telegraph) Luke returns with a new set of poems that get to grips with the idea of JOY. Is it possible, as a 42 year old, to feel pure unbridled happiness, and what does it look like?

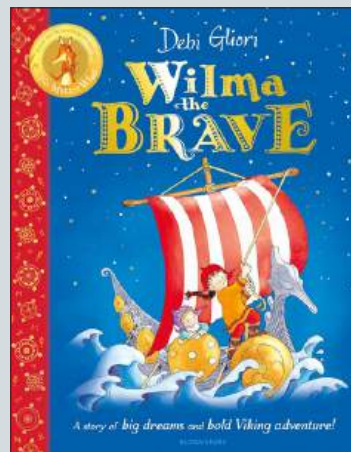
The French writer Henri de Montherlant said that "happiness writes white" but Wright's not exactly starting with a blank page. The poet writes urgently and warmly about family, fatherhood and the joy of language itself. We might have to go down to come up, but we'll get there in the end. Come let a little joy into your life with a raconteur and wordsmith at the top of his game.



Luke Wright

GPW

The Young Lit Fix



Wilma the Brave

By Debi Gliori

£7.99 paperback

Published by Bloomsbury Children's Books

Review by *Nicky Mathewson*

WILMA, Viking warrior, slayer of monsters is not taken seriously by her older brothers, but her baby brother Harald adores her. She is the teller of stories and the dreamer of dreams, one day she will sail the seven seas.

Girls should be cooking, cleaning and mending according to the boys, while they do all the "important stuff", but Wilma has big plans to make her dreams of being a Viking warrior come true.

Whilst carrying out her chores, Harald is accidentally blown out to sea on a longboat after wandering too far from camp. So Wilma comes to his rescue, but there are no boats so she jumps on a shield and rows after Harald using the Dinhorn as a paddle. She finds him safe and tries to sail home but a hungry polar bear has other ideas. Will Wilma be able to outsmart it?

This is an utterly charming story of family and courage which gently tries to stamp out old fashioned views. Debi Gliori is best known for her book *No Matter What* which is fast becoming a children's classic. I love her storytelling and her beautiful illustrations have a warm nostalgic feel.

Perfect to read aloud to babies and toddlers.

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