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We live in a dark city. This is not necessarily a bad thing. In my opinion, London's streets look their best on cold and gloomy winter nights. No less an observer than Charles Dickens admiringly called it a 'black, shrill city... with no vent in the leaden canopy of its sky'. Joseph Conrad rejoiced in London, 'half lost in night'.

However, even those literary mega-lads would admit it can all get a bit much. Especially during the month of February, beginning as it does just as the New Year buzz runs out and the consequences of your Christmas profligacy are felt in a now-throbbing overdraft. February. Objectively the crappest month, what with its weird length, chronic drizzle and almost sarcastic celebration of love slap bang in its middle.

The good news is that eventually February will end. And by the time it does, your days will have improved by two extra hours of sunlight. Imagine! In the meantime, don't despair at the darkness that defines our alleys and side streets. London's true light shines from the people filling its pubs, cafés and galleries. It's a mix found nowhere else. Our world has never felt brighter.

THE EDITOR'S ESSENTIALS Three things you have to do this week



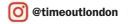
I don't know if I'm late to the pastry party, but Ottolenghi's parmesan pretzels are a serious upgrade on my usual stodgy croissant.



Kiln Theatre needs some cash. Check out its website for info on two great fundraisers, including an on-stage Q&A with Helen Mirren.



Hove Charlie Bones's morning show on NTS Radio. The music's upbeat, smart and, best of all, usually new to me.







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Advertising 7813 6000, advertising@timeout.com Circulation circulation@timeout.com

Commercial MD EMEA Lawrence Horne

Advertising Sales Ian Tournes (Director), Stephen Jones, Natalie Reynolds, Juliet Grant, Donald Fenton, Banbha O'Hagan Daniel Sinclair Nesha Fleischer, James Hooper, Robyn Eldridge, Emma Myland

Head of Media Partnerships

Karen Fischer **Creative Solutions** Wayne Mensah (Director), Tamsin Vincent, Callum Sinclair, Charlie Liddington,

Nicola Foxwell Project Management Junior Olokodana (Project Management Lead), Nicki Wymer, Frankie Biggs, Zara Taylor, Chloe Godwin

E-commerce Minesh Shah Senior Director) Live Events Sylvia Kowalska

Global Editor-in-Chief London Editor Joe Mackertich Associate Editor/Chief Sub Editor Chris Waywell Deputy Chief Sub Editors Kei Kikuchi, Sarah Cohen **Digital Editor** Ellie Walker-Arnott Associate Editor/
Drink Editor Laura Richards

Features Kate Lloyd (Editor) Events Katie McCabe (Editor), Alexandra Sims (Deputy Editor News & City Life

Isabelle Aron (Editor) Film Phil de Semlyen (Global Editor) Music & Nightlife Oliver Keens (Editor) Theatre, Dance & Comedy Andrzej Lukowski (Editor) Art & Culture

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Art Director Bryan Mayes **Designers** Philip Lay (Senior), Jason Tansley (Senior Commercial) Picture Desk Manager

Photographer Andy Parsons **Head of Production Deputy Production Editor**

Time Out Group CEO Julio Bruno
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Cover Photo illustration Justin Metz

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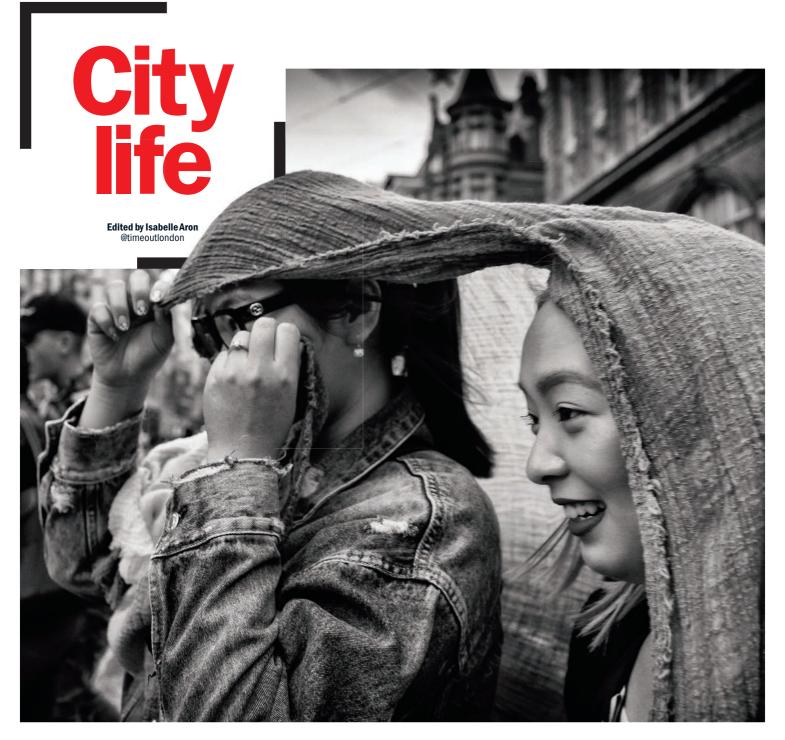












Love through a lens

As photography competition Love in London returns, we explore the story behind a runner-up from 2018, which captures a moment of intimacy on hectic Oxford Street

wayward double-decker buses. Speedwalkers rushing with their heads down. Stray umbrellas at every turn. Oxford Street is filled with obstacles that might ruin a photographer's perfect shot. That challenge was what appealed to Londoner Stephen Swain when he set out to document quiet moments in the chaos of central London. 'I love the vibrancy of London,' he says. 'I started off photographing anything and everything. Then after I'd been doing it for about a year, I began noticing themes: people smoking, couples, things like that.'

His shot 'Give Me Shelter' (above) captures a moment of affection and joy between friends on a hectic and drizzly Oxford Street. 'That's what you're waiting for – the synchronicity,' Swain explains. 'It's rare, but it does happen. When everything fits into place, it's very rewarding.'

The photo, which caught two friends taking shelter from the rain, was a runner-up in the Love Your Friends category of photography competition Love in London in 2018. After a year off, the competition is back for 2020 and entries open this week. It's a celebration of love, positivity

and happiness in the city – and once again, the winning submissions will appear on billboards across the capital. It's also raising money for Relate, with all entry fees going to the charity.

There are six categories, all celebrating love in the city. If you feel like your candid portraits of your cute dog are wasted on Instagram, there's even a section for animal pictures. At last, your camera-hogging pooch could get the fame it deserves. ■ ElHunt

→ The competition closes on Mar 2 and entries cost £3, which will be donated to charity Relate. Find out more at www.loveinlondon.org.uk

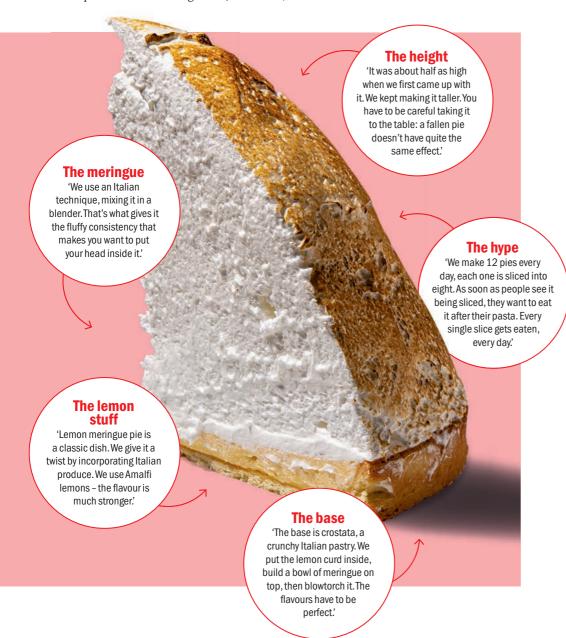


What goes into the London plates that everyone bangs on about

THE BRAINS BEHIND OTT Shoreditch trattoria Gloria were so convinced that its lemon dessert would be the shit that they called it The Incomparable Lemon Pie on the menu. Strong move, but it paid off: no visit is complete without ordering a slice,

even if you've just eaten your own weight in pasta. We asked Filippo La Gattuta, UK executive chef of parent company Big Mamma, to talk us through the towering dish's innards. ■ Bobby Palmer

→ Gloria, 54-56 Great Eastern St. O Old St. £6.





CURTAIN ROAD E

EC2

THE STREET THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Presenter *Clara Amfo* reminisces about nights out in east London

CURTAIN ROAD was where Plastic People used to be – and where I made some friends for life. Around 2010, I was going there at least twice a week. It was like in those American sitcoms where there's that one place everyone hangs out. That's what Plastic People was for me.

I remember the day
I heard it was closing.
I was gutted. Everyone
remembers that era really
fondly. I get super-emotional
about Plastic People even
now. I feel proud that I got
to experience going to that
club regularly until it was
shut down.

Curtain Road was part of the making of me, especially as a music lover. At Plastic People you'd hear hip hop, funky house and techno. It was a great place to get an education in music. My favourite night there was a hip hop night called Gulliver.

Me and my friend Sharon could be there from 10pm and we wouldn't leave until around 6am. I was living in Clapham Junction at the time, so when I left I'd have to walk to Liverpool Street and get the 35 bus all the way home. It was such a trek, but I didn't mind. I cherish my memories of that time. I found my home in clubland on that street. Interview by Isabelle Aron → Clara Amfo's new podcast 'This City' is released weekly on Tuesdays.

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HAPPENED **HERE**

Comedian Alex Edelman on the time he went to an occult bookshop for a cauldron and got shamed for his 'negative energy'

I LOVE BOOKSTORES: fancy bookstores, anarchist bookstores, bargain bookstores, whatever. But Treadwell's in Bloomsbury isn't just a bookstore, it's an occult bookstore that also sells supplies for 'practising occultists'.

I was there for a cauldron. My friend had asked me to take one to LA for her. She'd told me, with a snobbish sniff, that if I was ever to buy a cauldron in London I simply had to buy it at Treadwell's.

As soon as I walked in I felt out of place. I was surrounded by crystal balls and books that spelt 'magic' with a K - and a staff member who was standing at the till looking annoyed.

I headed downstairs to the cauldron section, where two older women were discussing supernatural experiences they'd had on public transport ('I've been having visions whenever I take the Northern line.').

As I was trying to decide on a cauldron, I noticed that the grumpy shop assistant had



migrated downstairs. She was wearing a cloak and an expression that indicated a sort of malignant curiosity. 'Can I help you?' she asked. I said no but she persisted. Eventually, with a real knife's edge in her voice, she said: 'Maybe you should buy something to help with your negative energy.'

I didn't have a comeback. No one ever does. People who say they do are either liars or Caitlin Moran. I just said: 'I don't believe in that stuff.' She replied: 'Everyone has an energy. And I don't want yours in my shop.'

I couldn't believe something so confrontational was happening in a place that smelled so heavily of patchouli. The other women weighed in. 'What kind of energy makes you rude to a customer?'

Without another word, the assistant sulkily went back upstairs. As I went to thank the two women, one of them put a hand on my shoulder and said: 'She's right, you know. You do have a negative energy. But so does my son.'

I bought a cauldron online. It was cheaper. ■

→ 'Alex Edelman: Just for Us' is at Vault Festival. Feb 11-16.

THREE OF THE BEST

Affordable spas

Where to treat yourself for under £50









Porchester Spa

Dating back to 1929, this spa offers old-school glamour as well as wraps, facials and massages at affordable prices.

→ Queensway. ↔ Royal Oak. Entry £28.90 for non-members. Treatments from £33.

Banya No 1

At this Old Street spa, you can relax in the steam room, brave the plunge pool or treat yourself to a traditional Russian massage.

£30 (off-peak). Treatments from £22.

Spa Experience

You'll find jet pools, saunas and turkish baths at this chain of affordable spas. Treatments won't break the bank either.

→ Multiple locations. Entry £10-£26. Treatments from £13



MY LONDON STORY



'Bringing people together through music is transformative'

WHEN HANNAH WHITE started gigging in London a decade ago, she was saddened by lots of the city's venues closing. In 2015, she decided to launch The Sound Lounge with her husband Keiron as a place where upcoming artists could perform. Over the last five years, the venue has moved around the city, as they've faced issues with developers and funding. Now it's running as a pop-up in Morden as they work on opening a new permanent spot in Sutton.

London has always been my home but my childhood here wasn't idyllic. I grew up with drugs, violence and crime around me. I started writing songs as a way to help me deal with those issues, but I was desperately private about them in the early years.

When I started performing, I found bringing people together through music hugely transformative. But lots of music venues were closing at the time and it was getting harder to find work. I decided to open The Sound Lounge so I could use music to help others in the way that it had helped me.

At the start, we had young artists coming to us from really desperate and difficult situations,

yet by the end of the project they were mixing with BBC producers. We set it up in the recording studio my husband was running in Colliers Wood. We built a coffee bar and a tiny stage and started doing these YouTube sessions where we invited musicians to perform.

We launched a crowdfunding campaign so we could fund a bigger venue in a derelict space in Tooting. The response was amazing – we raised £15,000 in 40 days and people offered to help out with everything from plumbing to PR.

Eventually, we were forced to close down by a developer who wanted to build flats on the site.

Despite a petition which gathered loads of support, we were evicted along with about 20 other independent businesses. It was really emotional. We'd put in all this effort and people had invested in our idea so we felt a massive responsibility to them.

Opening a music venue in London hasn't been

easy. Since our Tooting place closed, we've been operating in meanwhile spaces. We're currently based in a disused bank in Morden. It's basically a concrete box, but it's amazing what a lick of paint and 200 metres of fairy lights can do.

We've had a lot of support which shows there's a demand for live music in London. We're currently setting up a permanent space in Sutton, which is a 250-capacity venue.

We're hopeful that we can make this project sustainable, especially since the Music Venue Trust's announcement that from April, grassroots venues will be eligible for a reduction in business rates. I think there's an exciting future ahead. ■

Interview by Rachael Funnell

→ www.thesoundlounge.org.uk

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CITY ENVY

Great things that we love in other cities

Reykjavik's penis museum

PRIM, PROPER and buttoned-up, Brits are known around the world for coyness about matters of the flesh. Isn't it time we took a more grown-up look at the body in all its glory?

Last year, London took an admirable step in the right direction with the launch of the Vagina Museum in Camden Town. But the capital is lagging behind when it comes to institutions of male anatomy. Not so in Reykjavik, which is home to The Icelandic Phallological Museum. This palace of the phallus has members from every type of mammal found in Iceland. Longing to examine a seal's nether regions? Desperate to see a polar bear's privates? It's got you covered.

London is full of phallic-looking skyscrapers and you'll find many a knob in Shoreditch at 4am on a Saturday, but we deserve more. London, it's time to make a stand. $\blacksquare Josh Hall$



ASKAN EDITOR Your going-out problems solved by Time Out editors

Idi from Seven Sisters asks:

'One of my new year's resolutions was to do more cultural things, but so far I've just stayed in and watched Netflix. I get a bit overwhelmed by the city's big galleries. Are there some smaller ones I could start with?'

Eddy Frankel, Art & Culture editor

London is full of incredible smaller galleries with constantly changing (and free) shows. Some of the best are within easy walking distance of each other



in Mayfair. Start out on Dover Street, going to Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, David Zwirner gallery and **Sprüth Magers**, before heading up via Phillips auction house to Gagosian and Almine Rechon Grosvenor Hill then over to Sadie Coles on Davies Street and finish at Michael Werner Gallery near Marble Arch. Then head home, powered entirely by the force of patting yourself on the back. ■

> Got a going-out dilemma? Email hello@timeout.com

W RD **ON THE STREET**

The most ridiculous things we've overheard in London this week

'I bought incense so my couch could feel at home.'

'I Marie Kondo-d my life before it was athing.'

'Do I fancy you or are you just in a high-vis?'

'I'm totally into the idea of fake marriage.'

'We're pivoting to Fortnite.'

'Seeinghis meme accountwasthe last straw.'

'I wouldn't have the balls to steal someone's bananas!'

'I'll be honest: I only started drinking water a year ago.'

'God, you're such a stressful loiterer!'

'First off, we need to agree on the surface area of a crumpet.'

'We have to paint the ceiling, too. It got squirted with breast milk.'

Overheard something weird? Tweet us #wordonthestreet @timeoutlondon



FREE LONDON

Put your money away! Here are the week's best free events



Eye-opening artwork in King's Cross

Head to King's Cross's gleaming new-build zone this week and you'll find 'Palm Temple'. The stained-glass installation looks like simple Insta fodder, but it contains an 'Extinction Bell' that tolls more than 150 times a day to mark the rate at which earth is losing species. It's a wake-up call, conveniently located near Dishoom and Aesop.

→ Lewis Cubitt Square. ← King's Cross. Until Feb 17.

Sex toy speed dating in **Shoreditch**

Skip the small talk at this sure-to-beawkward night. You'll make your way around five booths. In each, you'll get to grips with a vibrator, dildo or toy you've never heard of before. Most importantly, you'll leave with a goody bag → Queen of Hoxton.

→ Liverpool St. Thu Feb 6, 6pm.

Spy walking tour in Westminster

Channel Eve Polastri on this walking tour of locations used by spies. It takes in Churchill's war rooms, MI5's Thames House and the Secret Intelligence Service's headquarters. Then, we imagine, you'll all get disappeared for knowing too much.

→ Meet Westminster tube. Sun Feb 9, 3pm-5pm.

Queer stories at the Museum of London

It's LGBTQ+ History Month. Celebrate by hearing stories of identity through time (from the exploits of Roman emperors to eighteenth-century 'macaronis') at the Museum of London, every weekend this month.

→ Museum of London.

O Barbican. Until Feb 29.

Six Nations screenings at Boxpark

Whether you're interested in the big rugby tournament for the 'sport' or just for the chance to watch thick-thighed men wrestle each other to the ground, you can do so at all three London Boxparks. (Get free tickets online.)

→ Croydon, Shoreditch and Wembley. Until Mar 14.

southeastern



C risp winter mornings sparkle under a layer of frost, adorning trees and pavements alike with glittering white, and steamy clouds of breath billow from the mouths of commuters on their way to work. But as we head further into the season and the weather takes a turn, problems

can arise across the rail network.

BREAKING

trains can get grip.

We also fit certain points along the tracks with heaters and NASA-grade

insulation to further prevent ice build-up, particularly in places where trains change direction to other lines. That's right, the battle against snow

keep you moving. These special trains are kitted

out with anti-icing fluid, which works in a similar

way to salt gritters on the road, preventing our

electric rail from freezing in the first place. And

they apply an adhesion gel to the tracks so that

and ice has become

space age.

To try to keep disruptions to your journeys to a minimum, we may have to make some changes to our timetables when had

when bad weather hits. Some services will be less frequent, and some stations may close, but this allows us to complete all the work needed to keep you moving, albeit a little slower than usual to keep you and our staff as safe as possible.

When the mercury plummets, even the lightest shower of rain or dusting of snow can freeze and become compacted on the rails, turning

into dangerous ice. Not only does this freeze around the electric rail and create an insulating effect preventing trains from drawing power and being able to move with







any speed – in the worst cases, it prevents them from being able to move at all.

When winter weather strikes we run snow-and-ice-busting trains around the clock to

We know you've got places to go this winter.

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Find out more at southeasternrailway.co.uk/winter-weather





Celebrate the little things

Hung up on the big, scary stuff? Lucy Jones says start paying attention to life's tiniest details



A few years ago, I started to discover joy and awe in the small things. I was spending some time in rehab meetings all over London, many in churches. Churches often have churchyards, and in one of them

I noticed a flower with pink and yellow petals like battenberg cake. It lit me up.

I started to look outwards, instead of down at my phone. I saw goldfinches, blue tits, sparrows and woodpeckers. Leaves and buds and seeds and roots. Cormorants, water voles, foxes and butterflies. I began to look at how our connection with the rest of nature can affect our mental and emotional health. The evidence blew me away. I found that walking down a tree-lined street or through a green space or urban woodland affects our body and brain in myriad ways. Hearing bird song can lower stress levels; watching spring light fall through the trees can be psychologically restorative; handling plants in soil may have mental health effects via the microbiome pathway; the smell of earth after rain, known as 'petrichor', can affect areas of the brain associated with calmness and relaxation.

It's not just paying attention to other species that can bring us joy. Take your earphones out on the bus and listen to the lives of others. Watch someone stroking their dog, or kissing the cheeks of a baby, or two men having a big old hug. Look up and see a ballet lesson in an old schoolroom. Puffs of flour as a baker kneads bread. It's all there, hiding in plain sight. Our humour: the seven noses of Soho; the fridge shop called 'Sellfridges'. Our love: the pet cemetery in Hyde Park; the different 'Mind the gap' announcement $at\,Embankment, preserved\,by\,staff\,to\,comfort$ the voice over artist's widow. Our appreciation of beauty: the street art, the buskers, the canals. There is so much, on every corner. We just have to open our eyes and ears.

 \rightarrow 'Losing Eden: Why Our Minds Need the Wild' by Lucy Jones is published by Penguin on Feb 27.



Make your own...



Tired of smelling like every other Londoner who's tried to cover up their hangover with Le Labo? At the **Experimental Perfume Club** you can create your own unique scent.

→ 4 Netil Lane. London Fields Overground.

From £25.



Londoners making craft beer is nothing new, but it's a cliché for a reason.

At **Brew Club**'s classes you can use its professional facilities to make

40 bottles of IPA, bitter or stout.

→ Hackney Walk, Arches 7-8 Bohemia Place.

Hackney Central Overground. From £120.



At **Blackhorse Workshop** you can learn how to weld a steel coffee table in a weekend. We're sure your friends will love hearing how you 'made it with fire' every time they come over.

→ 1-2 Sutherland Rd Path. Blackhorse Rd Overground. £235.





Adele Brydges runs regular workshops on decorating beautiful ceramic sex toys. They're fired in the kiln before you take them home. Let's hope that's not the only hot action they get.

→ The Casting Room. Hackney Wick

Overground. £125.



Sourdough starter
Give a man some Bread Ahead

sourdough and he'll accidentally eat it in one sitting; teach a man to make **Bread Ahead** sourdough and he'll binge on bread for a lifetime.

→ Borough Market, Cathedral St. ← London Bridge. £90 half day, £180 full day.



From throwing to glazing, the beginner pottery courses at **The Kiln Rooms** give attendees the opportunity to create home decor they can display with pride (even if it is a little wonky).

→ Peckham Levels. Peckham Rye Overground.
One-off taster session £85.



Thinking of buying a new bike? **Bamboo Bicycle Club** runs fourday workshops where you can build a cutting-edge, sustainable two-wheeler that's also completely recyclable.

→ Bamboo Bicycle Club.
↔ Canning Town. £695.



Tote bag

Put down your Daunt Books bag and pick up new skills at a **Sew It** with Love class. The Boxy Tote Bag workshop will teach you how to use patterns and sew on a machine.

→ Yellow Studio, Old Paradise Yard.
→ Lambeth North. £50.



Learn the recipe for a euphoric banger

-1-

Let's build suspense straight away and start the song with a drum roll. It worked on 'Stand!' by Sly & The Family Stone and 'It Ain't Over 'Til It's Over' by Lenny Kravitz. Google his name with the phrase 'wardrobe malfunction' and you'll see that Lenny is a master of euphoric release.

-2-

Try to make your verses inane (in a good way) and catchy. You could even make them call and respond like in 'Do You Love Me', by The Contours, from the 'Dirty Dancing' soundtrack.

-3-

Teasing is fun, and a good way to build euphoria. Think of those cheeky little drum taps that delay the chorus of Olly Murs's 'Heart Skips a Beat'.

-4-

A banger makes its bones with the chorus, and a surefire way to engineer drama is to just lay your love on the line. Something like Robin S's 'Show Me Love' or Alison Limerick's 'Where Love Lives'. Overshare if you need to – it's all in a good cause.

-5-

If you're a genius like Beyoncé, you won't waste the ending with a boring fade-out. Instead, why not go wild with a series of escalating key changes like in 'Love on Top'?







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Abandon irony

In need of some endorphins? These three club nights will get you grinning



Mehmooni

Iranian hospitality is legendarily effusive. Happiness is thus a shoo-in at this bash that's a tribute to the Iranian house party.
→ @mehmooni.london on Instagram.

← Afrobowl

Afrobeats meet a bowling party. How are you not smiling already?!

→ Tavistock Hotel. ← Russell Square. Next one Feb 21. £8.80.

Lucky Cloud

Evoking seminal NYC party The Loft, host Colleen 'Cosmo' Murphy and friends create an audiophile disco experience in a community centre four times a year. The results are friendly, spiritual and soul-edifying.

→ www.facebook.com/lucky.cloud1



Hey, Katy Hessel
- you're the
happiest curator
in London!
What artworks
cheer you up?

'Turner Prizewinning artist **Lubaina Himid's** current display at Tate Britain sees her reclaim ownership of works in Western art history and spotlights her vibrant pieces, which feature women of colour. It always cheers me up when I see artists given a platform to comment on the too often male-dominated history of art.'

 \rightarrow

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I enjoy the process of practising.

It becomes quite meditative and is fun as hell. You wanna always keep the tools sharp.

People think we can't see faces when we're on stage. We totally can. You can always see the

I have full-blown conversations with [Femi's brother and Ezra bassist] TJ on stage. It will look like we're talking about something technical but he'll be like 'Bro, do you remember Darren from school? He's in the

That crowd roar at the end of a drum solo is beautiful, when the band crashes back in. You can be in your own musical world when you're soloing. But you

Church is my happy place. I'm on drums there this Sunday.

The Twelve Pins pub in Finsbury Park makes me happy too. You know that point where you can go into a pub on your own and someone will say 'All right Femi'? I'm almost there with it. Interview Oliver Keens → Ezra Collective play Dreamland, Margate on Sat May 30.

But I had a coping strategy.

I'd switch on an Usher track,

pretend I was at Wembley.

play along, close my eyes and



PERFECT GIFTS FOR THAT SPECIAL PERSON





















Encourage your inner child

No offence, but if 11-year-old you met adult you, they'd think you were an idiot. There you are, spending your disposable income on posh olive oil and Malin+Goetz soap when you could be using it on things that are actually fun. The kinds of things your parents deemed a 'waste of money' or 'too dangerous'.

Always wanted roller skates? Now you can join an actual roller derby team. London Roller Derby's beginner programme costs just £20 per month and welcomes newbies every four to eight weeks. Or if you were obsessed with 'Tony Hawk's Pro Skater' but were never allowed your own deck, head to one of House of Vans' free weekend Skate Skool sessions. (Who cares if teenagers laugh at you on the halfpipe.)

Maybe you were obsessed with 'The Karate Kid' and have always wanted to get a black belt. That's an easy one. Go to **Urban Kings** in King's Cross. Did you constantly beg for a guitar for Christmas but never get one? Book yourself in for classes at City Academy in Farringdon and you

can channel the spirit of Late Of The Pier, System Of A Down or whatever band you had on your walls.

Meanwhile, at The Prince Charles Cinema you can stay up all night watching films and eating Haribo without inviting your parents' wrath. (Although don't make plans for the next day. You're old now, you'll need recovery time.) The next movie marathons include Studio Ghibli and Quentin Tarantino (£20) and run from around 9pm till dawn.

So, go ahead - let your inner child take control of your Google Calendar and embrace the fact that you can use the money from your dull, tiresome job to pay for things you've always dreamed of doing. You will feel alive again.

FACE?

Hey, Mia Johansson from Swift - you're the happiest bartender in Soho! What's the drink that always cheers you up?

'Spritzes just scream holidays abroad and lighter times to me. They're a good pick-me-up during dreary months like February. I am loving our Swift Solstice at the moment. It's made with blood orange vermouth and is full of flavour.'

Make peace with musicals

Theatre editor *Andrzej Łukowski* hates jazz hands as much as you

If, for you, the expression 'feelgood musical' triggers a sensation of blood-curdling horror, don't worry. You don't have to endure the hendo grimness of 'Mamma Mia!' to find something upbeat. '& Juliet' absolutely is that typical

do, but even he finds these two shows make him feel amazing jukebox musical, but it's a

parody: a preposterously OTT, wilfully trashy rewrite of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' that's stuffed with the pop hits of Max

Martin. Yes, it's silly, but it is intensely knowing about it. If you'd like something less arch but still fun, look no further than

'Everybody's Talking About

Jamie'. The last big homegrown smash musical, it's a feisty but heart-warming tale inspired by the true story of a Sheffield teen who decided to live an unconventional life, with catchy songs. Both will make life sweeter, without a nasty sugar comedown.



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TASTES LIKE



*Comparative test results with 208 consumers of semi-skimmed milk.

SEMI



Stave off climate guilt

Worried that you might be a planet murderer? Zing Tsjeng is too

Last year, I read a climate change paper that left me terrified. The report, Deep Adaptation: a Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy, claims that society will soon face nearinevitable environmental collapse.

Since then, the way I feel about life has changed. I have enough guilt to keep the Hot Priest from 'Fleabag' busy. Drunk-eating a dirty burger? May as well have eaten Babe. Easy Jet flight to Amsterdam? Straight to hell, do not pass purgatory.

I'm not the only one who feels powerless. More than two-thirds of 18-to-24-year-olds are more worried than ever about climate change – and 'Help! I'm experiencing extreme feelings of hopelessness about the destruction of our ecosystem' is not exactly Hinge profile material.

The good news is that there's an easy way to keep climate guilt at bay: doing something about it.



I found comfort in growing my own veg to make my eating habits more sustainable, and it's also had an unexpected benefit: it's hard to despair about earth when your hands are full of it. At gardens like the Priory Common Orchard in Hornsey you can grow-your-own with others. Meanwhile you can plant trees (a frontline in the fight against global heating) with groups like Tree Musketeers in Hackney.

But most of all, go easy on yourself. Take comfort in everyday

acts of kindness to the planet: switching off the lights, putting on an extra jumper and turning down the heating. And don't worry too much when you mess up. We could put out the wrong recycling bins every day for the rest of our lives and it still wouldn't touch the worst excesses of ExxonMobil. If there's one thing I learned from the 'Avengers' films, it's that saving the world is a group effort.

→ Zing's talking at Eco-Anxiety: How to Cope with a Changing World. Southbank Centre. Apr 6.

Dose up on green stuff

Escape the city in London's most peaceful parks



Hampstead Hill Garden

If Hampstead Heath is a wild, kiteflying extrovert, this otherworldly spot is its more pensive mate. You'll want to whisper as you wander along these century-old, greenery-swathed walkways.

→ Inverforth Close. ↔ Hampstead.



Postman's Park

Take a moment to contemplate a series of plaques commemorating Londoners who have lost their lives saving others, from Victorian times to 2007. They make moving – and surprisingly uplifting – reading.

→ King Edward St. ↔ St Paul's.



St Dunstan in the East Church Garden

There's a reflective vibe in this garden, which has grown out of the ruins of a City church bombed in the Blitz, but the way something so lovely has sprouted in this sad space is joyous.

→ St Dunstan's Hill. ↔ Monument.



Hey, Robin Gill from The Dairy. You're the happiest chef in London! What's the meal that always cheers you up?

'A lovely bowl of beef bourguignon is my happiness dish. With loads of nice red wine and creamy mashed potato with a generous dollop of horseradish cream. It's a large hug in a pot.'



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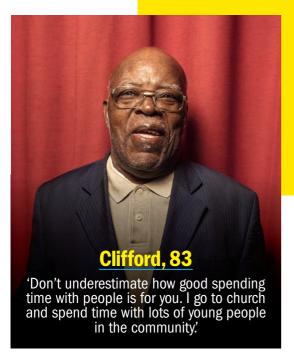
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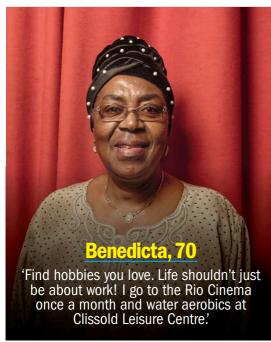
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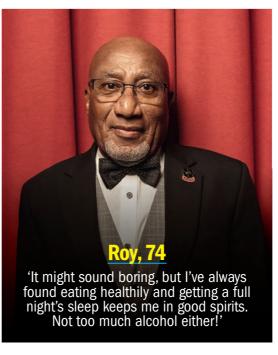
Discover how to not give a shit about getting older

The partygoers at Hackney's
The Posh Club are keeping the good
vibes going well into their eighties.
How do they do it?









→ The Posh Club is a social club for older people. It runs at St Paul's Church Hall on Wednesdays. Book for £5 or volunteer via tracey@theposhclub.co.uk.



Copy this woman

Proper legend *Irene Lewington* is 91 and living fearlessly

Try everything. For me, that means drag-racing. My son's got a car that I drive, because if I did more than 60mph in my own, it would fall to pieces. I've also done parachute jumps; if I had the money, I would do them every week because it's so wonderful up there. And I've been go-karting and abseiling. I want to go and abseil the Cheesegrater next -that's around 50 floors. I'd encourage everyone to do it: don't be scared!

It's also good to be around other people. I volunteer with lots of organisations, for the simple reason that I might need them myself one day, and I let my neighbours use my allotment. The only thing I say is that they can't grow cannabis.

Remember it doesn't hurt to be grateful for being alive. Be polite. Be interesting, not boring: if you start talking about your health, people are going to glaze over.

NTERVIEWS: SAMWILLS PORTRAITS: CHRISTOPHERB

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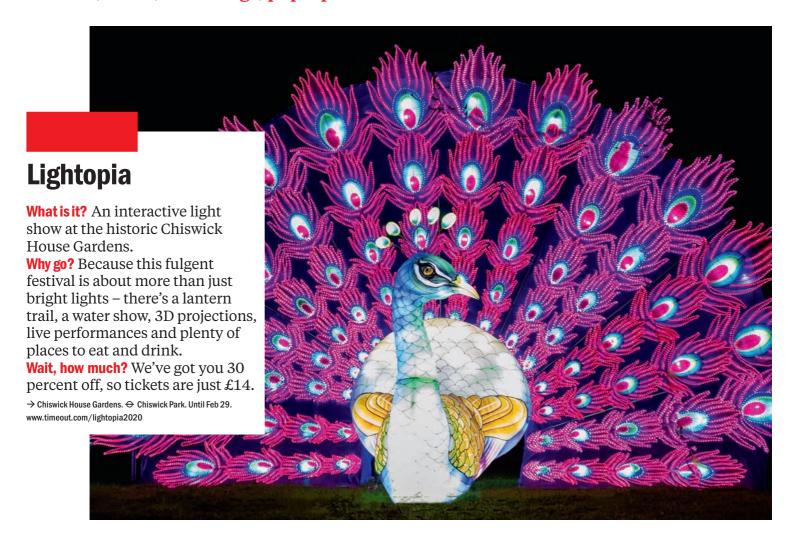
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Thames Rockets

What is it? A speedboat ride on the Thames, complete with a hilarious commentary from your tour guide. Why go? Between the pubs and the pop-ups, most of us don't take the time to see London's glorious sights. And what better way to see your city than from the river?

Wait, how much? With this deal you'll save a third on the regular price – tickets are only £29.95.

→ London Eye Pier. ↔ Waterloo. Until Mar 20. www.timeout.com/thamesrockets

Valentine's concerts

What is it? Three candlelit classical concerts at two incredible venues. Why go? For one of London's most romantic Valentine's experiences. Not only will you hear the timeless genius of Vivaldi and Beethoven, you'll get a complimentary red rose to give to your significant other (smooth lines not included). Wait, how much? Tickets start from £8.25, saving you 45 percent.

£8.25, saving you 45 percent.

→ Multiple locations. Feb 13 and 14.

→ Multiple locations. Feb 13 and 14.
www.timeout.com/valentinesconcerts

'Abba: Super Troupers the Exhibition' at The 02

What is it? A show charting the story of one of the world's biggest bands.
Why go? Learn more about the tumultuous rise and fall of the Swedish superstars. Walk through immersive rooms inspired by their albums and get a glimpse into the members' personal stories.
Wait, how much? With tickets for just £15, you can take a chance on this.
→ The O2. ↔ North Greenwich. Until Aug 31

www.timeout.com/supertroupers

Penderyn whisky masterclass

What is it? A whisky-tasting class featuring five Welsh drams and matched food pairings.

Why go? To drink some great whisky and eat some Welsh grub, of course, but also to learn from the pros: Forbes's whisky writer Felipe Schrieberg will be teaching the class.

Wait, how much? Half the normal price – tickets are just £34.99.

→ Factory Leather Lane. ⊕ Chancery Lane.

Until Mar 11. www.timeout.com/welshwhisky

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Travel

Edited by Laura Richards timeout.com/travel



Steamy breaks

With spas moored along the harbour or floating on its waters, Oslo's fjord sauna scene is worth the plunge

IN 2011, SWEDISH

bohemian Martin Lundberg sailed his houseboat into the Norwegian capital's freezing fjord in search of a sauna to warm his bones from the sub-zero temperatures. When he found the Langkaia waterfront sorely lacking in spas, he recruited a local team to build a makeshift floating sauna from collected driftwood. In 2016, Oslo Fjord Sauna was born, and it has helped kickstart a marine sauna trend to coincide with the city's plans to spruce up the harbour. Now there's a waterside or waterbound sauna for practically every day of the week - plus an ice-cold fjord to dip into afterwards, for those brave enough to take the plunge.

\checkmark The mobile one

Its name might induce sniggers, but there's nothing funny about **Kok**'s tempting combination of sailing and steaming. Each of the company's five saunas also operate as boats with electric motors, meaning that sweating sessions can be combined with a cruise of the Oslofjord. For 2020, they're launching ice-bathing courses inspired by Dutch extreme athlete Wim 'The Iceman' Hof, who touts the benefits of cold therapy. 'We wouldn't dare do this if it wasn't for the steaming hot sauna waiting,' co-founder Kristin Lorange assures us.



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← The designer one

The innovative **Oslo Fjord Sauna** opened its third floating steam room this month. Named Anda, meaning 'duck', it was designed collaboratively by three Oslo-based architect and engineering firms. This one takes the shape of a round amphitheatre – with a large window facing the lush Hovedøya island and a wooden swimming deck – and

hosts weekly drop-in Aufguss sauna rituals. During these sessions, essential oils are poured on to hot stones, sometimes accompanied by music and (very sweaty) dancing. Look out for mussels hanging from the sauna's underbelly, there to enhance the fjord's biodiversity. → 1,800kr (£150) for exclusive hire.

www.oslofiordsauna.com

More things to do in the city at timeout.com/

The extra one →

'Nomadic art project' Salt arrived in Oslo three years ago after stints in Nordland and Bergen, a complex of pyramid-shaped structures that house art exhibitions, gigs, film screenings and no less than four saunas. Árdna is one of the world's largest, with space for 100 and featuring an adjoining party bar. There's the smaller, hotter Skroget and the private-bookingsonly Naustet. Finally, Himmelsauna sits on a roof terrace overlooking the fjord and the city's twinkling lights – it's fitting that its name translates as 'sky sauna'.

 \rightarrow 195kr (£16.50) for a sauna session, from 830kr (£70) for private hire. www.salted.no



↑ The eco one

For Oslo's youngest floating sauna fleet, every outing is offset by a good environmental deed. So while **GreenBoats** provides electric-powered boat saunas that set off from upmarket Aker Brygge, it also runs regular cleanup events around the city and its waters. Customers that collect plastic waste while boating get discounts, and there are twice-daily drop-in times for sauna sessions, plus aromatherapy and cold immersion. No licence is

required – just an eco-friendly attitude as well as a convivial outlook on life in general. As manager Dean Hansson puts it: 'The sauna is where people here tend to open up.'

ightarrow 200kr (£17) for a drop-in session, from 2,500kr (£210) for private hire. www.greenboats.no



By Florence Derrick Who is the sail-andsteam queen.



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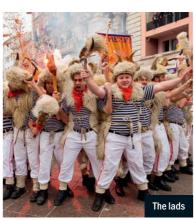


ESSENTIAL Rijeka

Punk rock, coffee and Carnival

What's the deal with Rijeka?

Croatia's primary seaport - and third-largest city - was once a thriving maritime hub, but is often overlooked by visitors to the country in favour of destinations that are more conventionally beautiful. Rijeka has its own rugged charm, though, with a hodgepodge of architectural delights that speak of the comings and goings of Europe's ruling dynasties. And now the star of Kvarner Bay is offering up a roster of events to visitors as European Capital of Culture 2020. Discover the country's largest carnival, a punk rock counterculture, heaps of affordable seafood and a convenient, alternative city break that would fit well either side of an island-hopping trip across the Adriatic.



If you only do one thing

Flock to Rijeka for **Carnival**, when the city transforms from port to party. It's the largest parade of its kind in Croatia despite the tradition only being revived in 1982. See **Korzo**, the historic main drag, awash with colourful floats through February, the action culminating on February 23, when locals wearing trippy horned animal masks and clanging bells take to the streets.

Dine in style

You can eat like a king even when on a limited budget by sampling delicacies from the Adriatic's depths in an atmospheric tavern – known as a konoba. The rustic brick walls, pastoral artwork and redcheckered tablecloths at **Konoba**Feral are typical of the style. Share a fresh fish platter followed by garlic-laden seafood linguine, all for around £15 per person.

Eat on the cheap

This city's rich history is perhaps best witnessed through its pastries. Head to **Rijeka Central Market** and choose from rich, cheese-filled börek, sweet and swirly nut rolls or tons of kinds of fruit strudel.

HANG OUT IN

THIS 'HOOD
The city is pretty walkable, so stick to the centre for your stay. Soak up the post-industrial harbour and its hangouts with a night on the Botel Marina, an actual boat hotel. Or on dry land, the Grand Hotel Bonavia has reasonable rates. traditional rooms and is right in the action, based just off Korzo.

Drink like a local

Coffee culture is big in this city. For an old-school cup of joe visit **Milman Caffe Bar**, a retro emporium where OAPs hang out after a stroll through the market. For something stronger, order a white wine spritzer. No, seriously. Neighbouring island Krk produces Žlahtina white wine, which the Croats love to water down in warmer months.

Stay up late

While the city might seem sleepy, dig deeper to find its rebellious streak. Croatian punk rock has its roots in Rijeka, and you can still get a taste of its guttural tones at **Tunel**, a cavernous railway arch open until 3am on weekends.

Soak up the vibes

Climb the 538 steps (or take a bus) to **Trsat**, where you'll find a peaceful monastery with beautiful grounds and statues of popes. Then duck into **Trsat Castle**, which provides a panorama of the city and out across the bay to Krk. Plenty of bars and restaurants nearby maximise on the vantage point (and up their prices accordingly).

Get cultural

You'll enjoy two hits of culture for the price of one when you catch an opera or ballet at the **Croatian National Theatre**, because the opera house is also home to intricate ceiling paintings by Gustav Klimt and his lesser-known brother Ernst.

Take a day trip

You can easily hop on a ferry or drive across a connecting bridge to **Krk** – the largest island in Croatia – for a day of hiking round its craggy coastline or lounging on the beach of a secluded bay.

Only in Rijeka

Peek & Poke is a square-eyeinducing nostalgia fest – a museum filled with a collection of over 1,000 rare computers and videogame consoles. Get hands on with them as part of the exhibition or check out one of the museum's late-night events to relive your student days.■ Laura Richards



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Things to Do

Edited by Katie McCabe timeout.com/thingstodo @timeoutlondon

'Darts has never been bigger'

Londoners are falling back in love with darts, but with so many pubs facing closure, where are people going to play?

A SEA OF FOAM fingers and chanting crowds in fancy dress filled Alexandra Palace for 16 days over Christmas for the World Darts Championship. Around 84,000 people attended in 2019, with more demand for tickets than ever before. 'It's certainly been the biggest and best yet in terms of buzz and profile, particularly with Fallon Sherrock's success,' said an Alexandra Palace spokesperson. Sherrock made history at the event when she became the first woman to defeat a male darts player at the Professional Darts Corporation World Championship, going on to reach the third round. Her success brought darts to a wider audience and put a much needed spotlight on women in the sport. This year, she will make her debut at Premier

League Darts, which begins on Thursday February 6.

One business that's riding the wave of this buzz all the way to the high street is Flight Club, an upmarket chain of darts bars where DJs, dancing and bottomless brunches are as much a part of the proceedings as the bullseyes. Since opening its original Shoreditch site in 2015, Flight Clubs have sprung up in Islington, Bloomsbury and Victoria. The set-up is all very flash: the electronic dartboards (at £30 for 90 minutes) have screens that take your picture as you play. The popularity of this kind of darts experience just keeps on growing: according to Flight Club, bookings increased by 177 percent from 2018 to 2019 and a whopping 94,265,200 darts have been thrown at its

London venues. Others are joining the high-end darts bandwagon too, like Darts Club London in Clapham, where you can play while tucking into wood-fired pizza.

from the trad pubs that host networks of local darts leagues. For Sherrock, new high-tech darts bars like Flight Club seem unfamiliar. 'The core reality of grassroots darts is the fun atmosphere of pubs and



'There's more people throwing darts in London than ever' $clubs, and \, not \, having \, to \,$ pay hourly or evening fees to play,' she says, 'But I do see it's more for entertaining'. For other enthusiasts though, upmarket $darts\,bars\,offer\,a\,space\,for\,the\,game$ at a time when its traditional homes

are disappearing.

Nolan's has been a famous darts

haunt in Vauxhall since 1985. Run

by Shaun Nolan and his dad Gabby,

the pub is legendary on the London

Let's. Play. Darts. Clockwise from left: Flight Club, Fallon Sherrock in action, fancy dress at the World Darts Championships

darts scene with matches played five days a week and connections with well-known players like Bobby George. It's also one of the few pubs left in the capital that still has a healthy set of dartboards. 'There were 20 darts pubs around when we first moved here; there are about three now,' says Gabby. 'Bermondsey and Rotherhithe were massive darts areas. Now the pubs that haven't been knocked down have all turned into gastropubs.'

'Darts has never been bigger,' adds Shaun. 'Thanks to Sky showing games and people like Fallon Sherrock, there's a whole different demographic of people playing now. There's more people throwing darts in London than ever, but there's just not enough pubs with dartboards.'

For Shaun, venues like Flight Club are a welcome addition to the London scene: 'Any kind of darts pub has got to be good,' he says, 'What London needs is more dartboards. If people go to those places and think, "I'm not too bad at this", then hopefully they'll look into joining a team, so it's a route into the game. Darts will die out if there are no places left with dartboards.'



By Alexandra Sims Who is awful at darts but can sing out One Hundred and Eighty like a pro.

EDITORS' PICKS

Darts bars

The Old China Hand

Self-described as a 'village pub in the city' (but with a very London selection of craft beers), this family-owned joint has two dartboards in the back. As a bonus, you can order in your own food while you wait for your turn to throw.

→ 8 Tysoe St. ↔ Angel. Darts: free Mon-Fri before 5pm, from £5 per hour Mon-Fri 5pm-11pm, all day Sat and Sun.

Nolan's

Darts newbies should head along to Nolan's on Wednesdays for a game and take full advantage of the darts experts who'll you find hanging out here.

→ 33 Wilcox Rd. ↔ Vauxhall.

Prices vary.

The Three Compasses

A reliable Dalston boozer with a changing roster of street food alongside craft beers, SNES gaming nights and a battered dartboard to throw stackers on.

→ 99 Dalston Lane. Dalston

Junction Overground. Darts: free,
£5 deposit for the darts.

Flight Club Bloomsbury

It may be a draw for corporate team-building events, but it has decent food and drink alongside the arrows and is great for a big group. And if your maths doesn't add up? Don't worry, the scores are all done by computer.

→ 55 New Oxford St.

→ Tottenham Court Rd. Darts: from £30 for 90 minutes.

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND

Friday



'Roads to Freedom: Power, Pimping and Pride'

From photos of flaming vehicles taken during the 1985 Handsworth riots to Ghana's cult car-shaped coffins, this night explores the cultural significance of motors.

→ V&A. ↔ South Kensington. Fri Feb 7. From £5.

GLUG The Chocolate Cocktail Club: Winter Pop-Up

Reach Augustus Gloop levels of chocolatey gluttony at a bar that serves nothing but sweet, heavy, cocoabased cocktails.

→ 96 Leather Lane.

↔ Chancery Lane. Fri Feb 7. £9, includes a chocolate cocktail.

SAMPLE The Tender Interval: The Sampler as Time Machine

How many samplers does it take to run a time-travelling night of experimental techno? You'll have to visit the ICA to find out. → ICA. ← Charing Cross.

Fri Feb 7. £10.

Saturday

SHOP Valentine's Grown and Thrown

Has your favourite cactus consciously uncoupled from its planter? Find a better match at a fair of jazzy pots and houseplants. → DIY Art Shop. Hackney Downs Overground. Sat Feb 8-Feb 16. Free.

LISTEN Mozart Quintet for Piano and Winds

Have a very different kind of after-hours sesh with the new late-night 'Lock-In' series from the Aurora Orchestra. → Kings Place. ↔ King's Cross. Sat Feb 8, 9.15pm. £9.



Fest en Fest

Dark rooms, unsettling music, the sight of impossibly agile people in unitards. It can only mean one thing: a festival of contemporary dance showcasing the work of Nordic and UK artists.

→ Trinity Laban. Greenwich DLR. Fri Feb 7-Sun Feb 9. £12.

Sunday

XR: Talks

Put your creeping Sunday dread in perspective at one of Extinction Rebellion's free talks on the realities of climate change, held in underground tunnels. On the agenda today: 'Visioning a better future: the limits of an imperial gaze'. Yes!

ightarrow The Vaults. ightarrow Waterloo. Sun Feb 9-Mar 22. Free.



LEARN Witch Hunts Today

Hear bestselling novelist Syd Moore and human rights lawyer Kirsty Brimelow discuss the impact of witchcraft belief and abuse, both past and present.

→ Conway Hall. ↔ Holborn. Sun Feb 9. £8.

BROWSE A South London Makers Market

Visit a bits and bobs market of handmade candles, lampshades and ceramics. The ideal Sunday mooch.
→ Upper Norwood Library Hub.
Crystal Palace Overground.
Sun Feb 9. Free.

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WONDERFUL WORLD OF C

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MAYOR OF LONDON



THREE OF THE BEST

Free film screenings



Freedom Free Films: 'One Sings, the Other Doesn't'

Prefer reading to film-watching? Compromise. Catch Agnès Varda's feminist musical about the friendship between two women living in 1970s Paris, while sitting in a room full of books. You can grab a new read for the tube ride home, too.

ightarrow Freedom Bookshop. ightarrow Aldgate East. Sun Feb 9.



House of Vans Cinema: Romcoms

Lapsed skaters can relive the awkward movie dates of their youth by watching old romcoms in a 100-seater cinema that has an underground skating bowl next door. Dig out your Stüssy hoodie for screenings of 'You've Got Mail', 'Before Sunrise' and 'Notting Hill'.

→ House of Vans. ↔ Waterloo. Various dates from Thu Feb 6-Mar 1.



Deeper into Movies: 'The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou'

What do you get when you combine the droll writing of Noah Baumbach with the colourful direction of Wes Anderson? An underwater quirkfest starring a deadpan Bill Murray in a little red beanie hat.

Angela Hui

→ Peckham Levels. Peckham Rye Overground. Tue Feb 4.



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Things to Do

TO DO

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 West



PARTY

9 Ninth Life **First Birthday** Weekender

Catford's nightlife scene got a boost when this festival-inspired pub opened there last year (cat, nine lives, get it? You get it). For its first birthday, the pub is throwing a weekendlong bash. There'll be UV performances from Neon Nights, Scratch DJ workshops, graffiti classes, a poetry slam, and a craft market from SoLo Craft fair. Think of it as a teeny tiny Glastonbury... in Catford. → Ninth Life. Catford rail.

Fri Feb 7-Sun Feb 9. Prices vary.

Blow MyWig!

Stay up with anarchic cabaret troupe Blow My Wig! as they perform queer comedy and Carly Simoninspired drag, and spin bangers into the early hours at this Vault Festival late.

→ Forge Lates, The Vaults. → Waterloo. Fri Feb 7. £11.50.

O Club De Fromage on Ice

Cheesy pop music and skating go glovedhand-in-gloved-hand at this ice rink disco. The music theme is '90s VS'00s, there'll be games and prizes and your terror of falling over will be reduced by the presence of a licensed bar.

→ Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace rail. Sat Feb 8. £10.

EXPLORE

Orchids Festival at Kew

Kew Gardens' big, bright flower fest is backfor its twentyfifth year. The theme for 2020 is Indonesia, a country home to 5,000 species of orchid. The botanic gardens' tropical greenhouse will be bursting with colourful plants for the occasion. Look out for orange orangutans, life-sized animals and an erupting volcano all made up of hundreds of blossoms. plus a carnivorousplant archway. Eek! → Kew Gardens. ↔ Kew Gardens, Sat Feb 8-Mar 8. Free with admission price.

EAT

The Great Sausage Roll Off

The mighty meaty pastry-cloaked snack is celebrated in all its fatty glory at this competition. Twenty entrants will go headto-head, rolling and cooking their pastries live before presenting them to professional chefjudges. If you're more into eating than baking, turn up on the night-the crowd get to scoff any leftovers. → The Red Lion. Barnes rail.

JOIN IN

Wed Feb 5. Free

U LGBT Badge Making Workshop

Was your school bag covered in badges back in the day? Make some protest pins for 2020 with a day of glueing and sticking at this workshop celebrating LGBT History Month. Learn about important LGBTQ+ symbols and let them inspire your designs. All materials will be provided.

- → Vagina Museum.← Camden Town. Fri Feb 7.£12.
- Royal Society Lates: Science Fiction

This sci-filate will be uncovering just how accurate scientists' predictions of the future have really been. Join talks on the works of Terry Pratchett, discuss the science of Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein', eat foods of the future cooked up by chefs, design your own scientific instruments and have a look around the beautiful Carlton House Terrace by candlelight.

→ The Royal Society.
↔ Piccadilly Circus.
Mon Feb 10. Free.



Cockapoo Café

Cockapoos of the capital are invited to bring along their humans to this day filled with pupcakes and excessive 'doggy decor' (humans can snack from a menu of cocktails and cakes). Aspiring dog owners are welcome too.

→ The Allegory. ↔ Old St. Sun Feb 9. From £10.

Hammer & Tongue

Storyteller Reload and London rapper-comic Joe Jacobs open this night of stanza-spitting spoken word and performance poetry. Feeling brave? Sign up to one of the open-mic slam slots.

→ The Book Club. ← Old St. Tue Feb 4. From £7.

LAST CHANCE

O 'Essex Road 6'

There's not long left to see Tintype gallery's show of eight newly commissioned films inspired by Islington's Essex Road, Screened seven days a week on a loop between 5pm and 11pm, each film draws on the rich cultural history of the mile-long street. From Adam Chodzko's film about a 'haunted' Islington ship, to an estate agent mockumentary-it's a window into a very different view of N1.

→ Tintype. Essex Rd rail.
Until Sun Feb 9. Prices vary.

EXCLUSIVE

Discover the story behind one of the UK's most iconic design companies with two-for-one tickets to 'Out of the Blue: Fifty Years of Designers Guild'.

> TIMEOUT.COM/DESIGNERSGUILD

Find 101 things to do at **timeout.com/101**







Parasite

IT'S RARE FOR a movie to effectively combine cinematic fireworks and social commentary. It's even rarer to do it in such a thrilling and mischievous way as Korean filmmaker Bong Joon-ho's home-invasion drama. 'Parasite' mirrors its characters, wearing a mask of politeness until it drops the pretence. The director of 'The Host'

and 'Snowpiercer' is no stranger to genre gymnastics, and here he tells the story of a poor Seoul family infiltrating the lives of a superrich household through suspense, drama, laughs and farce, allowing moments of pure terror, quiet observation and baroque noise to sit happily alongside each other. It never jars as it glides from one state

of being to the next.

The appeal of 'Parasite' is simple and age-old: inequality, class, manners and how we protect what's ours – or gain that which we believe should be ours. We meet a hard-up family living in a 'semi-basement' with a view of an alleyway where folk

like to come and take a piss. The husband Ki-taek (Song Kangho), wife Chung-sook (Chang Hyae-jin) and their twentysomething kids, son Ki-woo (Choi Woo-sik) and daughter (Ki-jung) are all scraping together a living doing odd jobs like constructing pizza boxes. The

fakes his CV and starts tutoring the daughter of handsome, rich, young businessman Mr Park (Lee Sun-kyun) and his equally polished wife (Yeo-jeong Jo). One by one, the family infiltrate the Park household – the black humour of their parade

touchpaper is lit when Ki-woo

umour of their parade of con jobs is a bit like watching Dennis Price knock off Alec Guinness's alter egos in 'Kind Hearts and Coronets'.

There's a blissful stretch where everything feels in equilibrium and the charade is working for all. But can it last? The Parks' home – a

WHAT IS IT...

A dazzling socialsatire-cum-homeinvasion-drama.

WHY GO..

For a garden party scene that will take months to shake off.

→ Director Bong Joon-ho (15) 132 mins.

paragon of luxury that was built by its previous owner, an architect - feels like another character, and Bong indulges its slick lines and gleaming surfaces, before it starts to show another face entirely. Our infiltrators may have just swapped one basement trap for another: can you ever leave the past behind? Bong wears his ideas lightly, and although it might sound like Michael Haneke's 'Funny Games', it's more compassionate and warm. This is a dazzling work, surprising and gripping from start to finish, full

TIME OUT MEETS

Bong Joon-ho

The South Korean director on his Oscar-nominated satire 'Parasite'



'Parasite' is about a struggling family feeding off a wealthy one. Class feels central to so many of your movies. Why does the subject interest you?

'I never intended to focus on class, [though] I do see the gap between rich and poor. More than that, I've always been interested in stories about money and power. I'm not that into superheroes.'

Where did the idea come from?

'When I was in college, I tutored for a rich family. It was more than just tutoring – I felt like I was peeping into their private lives. Of course, I didn't do anything bad like in "Parasite".'

That house you filmed in is incredible. Where did vou find it?

'We couldn't find the right house, so we built it. The poor family's house, too – we built it in a water tank so we could do the flood sequence.'

How much of the film is planned out ahead of time?

'I try to follow my storyboards as closely as possible, but once I set the stage I want the actors to be free. I want things to happen things we haven't planned.'

'Parasite' won the Palme d'Or and is up for Best Picture at the Oscars. How important are awards?

'They're important in that they help us filmmakers continue our careers. Winning the Palme d'Or was a huge honour. But at the same time, it can feel like a burden, so I try to pretend it didn't even happen. Too many people keep on mentioning it.'

You make dark movies. Would you call yourself a cynic or a hopeful person?

'There's pessimism, sure, but always a sliver of hope. Supplying hope too easily lowers the value of it. Showing a peek of it, within the darkness, shows more respect.' ■ Interview by Joshua Rothkopf

of big bangs and small wonders. By Dave Calhoun

Clockwise from above left: Park So-dam,

Choi Woo-shik and (below) Yeo-jeong Jo

Whose home is a lot more invasion-proof since he got those crocs for the moat.

MY LIFE IN MOVIES

James

Famous Londoners share their favourite film spots



What's your first London moviegoing memory?

'I grew up in Yorkshire, so the first ones I remember were when I moved to London in my twenties. I lived on the Harringay Ladder and being an actor and having bizarre timetables, I'd go to Screen on the Green in the afternoon and take over one of the sofas. I'd pay for one seat and then manspread.'

What's your favourite London cinema?

'Clapham Picturehouse. I'm not a massive fan of the big franchise blockbusters and I'm really, really bad when it comes to popcorn. I turn into this cantankerous old man when it comes to popcorn, so I gravitate to the smaller screens where there's less scope for noise.'

Have you been to any immersive cinema experiences?

'I went to my first one recently: 'The Deep Blue Sea' "Romeo + Juliet" at Secret Cinema. My girlfriend and I sat on a rug, drank a bottle of wine and felt very nostalgic. Did I get into character? I went in a Hawaiian shirt but if anyone had come up to me to do immersive acting, I'd have run a mile. I get very nervous that someone might spot me being very earnest.'

Which films would you say sum up London?

'It has to be something like "The Long Good Friday", "Withnail and I" or Terence Davies's "The Deep Blue Sea": nostalgic films with that smogridden vibe.'

What's been your most memorable place to shoot?

'I had this amazing long Steadicam shot beneath the courtyard at Somerset House on this film called "Angelica". In "Hampstead", I had a scene

> spend hours asking her everything you'd ever want to ask her about Woody Allen and "The

in a sushi bar with Diane Keaton. I got to

Godfather".'

What was the last film you saw at the cinema?

'I saw "1917" at the [BFI] Imax. It was fucking amazing.'

Do you have a favourite premiere?

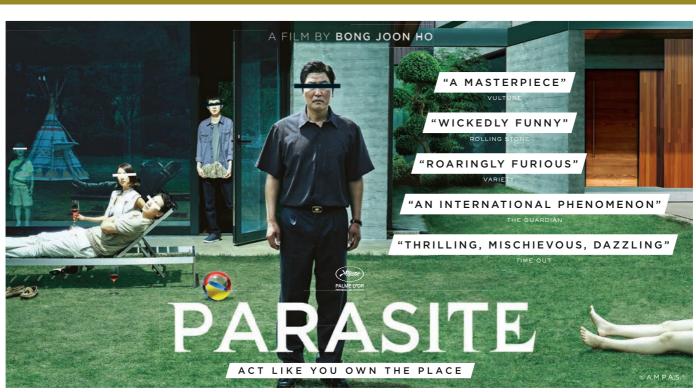
'The Leicester Square gala for "Little Women" was lovely - I was proud to be there with a British cast

for this big American movie, even if I only had a small role. My sister took her baby to see "Little Women" at a scream-along screening – she sent me a photo of him screaming his head off during one of my scenes.' ■ Interview by Phil de Semlyen → 'Mr Jones' opens Fri Feb 7.

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Mr Jones



WHAT IS IT..

A journalist uncovers a Stalinist atrocity in 1930s Ukraine.

WHY GO..

To see why James Norton is tipped to play 007.

Director Agnieszka Holland (15) 116 mins.



MOVIES ABOUT CRUSADING journalists tend to feature pavement-pounding and persuasive phone calls. There's usually a scene in an archive and at least one row with an exasperated editor. Then someone wins a Pulitzer Prize. Refreshingly, Agnieszka Holland's early '30s drama ticks few of those boxes. And though someone does win a Pulitzer, it's not who you'd expect. History is a knotty business; it's saying: go with it.

James Norton shows his range as Jones, an owlish Welsh journo who heads to Russia hoping to interview Stalin. He's soon diverted by rumours that the dictator is overseeing a secret famine in the Ukraine. Real nobility underpins his efforts to break the story - even as others, including Peter Sarsgaard's oily New York Times stringer and Stalin apologist George Orwell (Joseph Mawle), dispute the evidence.

Scenes of the famine itself lend the second half of the film an urgency that the first lacks, consumed as it is in scenesetting in dusty government chambers. If a subplot showing Orwell writing 'Animal Farm' as he becomes persuaded by Jones's evidence doesn't entirely work, there's plenty here that does. And not a single scene in a car park. ■ Phil de Semlyen

Dolittle



Robert Downey Jr plays the man who talks to animals.

It's not as terrifying as 'Cats'.

Director Stephen Gaghan (PG) 101 mins.



'DOLITTLE' HAS LONG been a dream project for its star, Robert Downey Jr, but it's hard to imagine that this was what he was dreaming about. Writer-director Stephen Gaghan finds little joy in the premise of Hugh Lofting's books about a man who can talk to animals. Gaghan, who made his name writing adult dramas like 'Traffic' and 'Syriana' (which he also directed), seems an odd choice to helm a movie in which one of the lead characters is an ostrich.

In this take, Dolittle is a recluse. He once sailed the world with his wife, chatting to animals and curing their ills. But following her death, he has locked himself away with a pack of assorted creatures (voiced by the likes of Emma Thompson and Tom Holland). Now the Queen of England has been taken ill, threatening the future of his home (long story), and the only thing that can save her is a fruit growing on an island that nobody has ever found. Dolittle is soon back in action.

The laziness of this premise – how can an undiscovered fruit be a known cure for anything? – is typical of the slapdash approach to most things in this film. Voiceover is used to paper over gaps in the story, while Downey Jr - who plays Dolittle as vaguely Welsh - often just looks baffled, as well he might. By the time we arrive at a finale centred on one grumpy creature's impacted bowel, all sense has vanished and pulling an ending out of an animal's bum seems the only option. ■ Olly Richards

THE TEN BEST

POP-UPS AND FESTIVALS

THIS WEEK

La Strada Not the reasonably priced pizza chain but Federico Fellini's magical 1965 road movie.

→ Close-Up Cinema. Shoreditch High St Overground. Wed Feb 5, 8.15pm. £12.

A Streetcar **Named Desire** Vivien Leigh and Marlon Brando joust explosively in this sweaty New Orleans-

- set melodrama. → Ciné Lumière.
- → South Kensington. Fri Feb 7, 7.30pm. £13.

The Sword in the Stone Arthurian legend is given the Disney treatment(it's got a talking owl) in this jolly caper from the Mouse House's '60s hot streak. → Phoenix Cinema. ← East Finchley. Sat Feb 8, 11am. £3.

Cyrano de

Bergerac

The Jungle Book

The simple bare necessities of life include catching this animated musical delight as often as humanly possible.

→ BFI Southbank. ↔ Waterloo. Sun Feb 9, 12.50pm. £8.80.

Fando y Lis Alejandro ■ Jodorowsky's surreal fantasia caused a full-scale riot when it

first screened in 1968.

Find out why. → Prince Charles Cinema. → Leicester Square. Sun Feb 9, 12.15pm. £9.

Story The American stand-

American:

The Bill Hicks

up is celebrated in this enjovable, nostalgic doc. Gideons welcome. → Whirled Cinema

Loughborough Junction rail. Thu Feb 6, 8pm. £6.

The 400 **Blows**

A coming-of-age classic with a freezeframe ending to rival 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid'.

→ Classic Cinema Club. ← Ealing Broadway. Fri Feb 7, 7.30pm. £7.

Gérard Depardieu plays the

big-beaked Parisian poet in this gem of a romantic comedy.

- → Regent Street Cinema. Oxford Circus.
- Sun Feb 9, 7.30pm. £13.

Gothique Film Society double bill

'Kill Me Tomorrow' and 'Demons of the Mind' make up a culty two-fer of Brit flicks.

- → The Cinema Museum.
- → Elephant & Castle. Fri Feb 7, 6.45pm. £8.

Oscars Week 2020

Five days until the Oscars and still no opinion on 'Jojo Rabbit'? Fear not, the Barbican has your back. An array of this year's prospects will be screening over the next week, so there's time to catch up before doing your sweepstake.

> Barbican Cinema. → Barbican. Fri Feb 7-Feb 13. www.barbican.org.uk



ALSO OPENING



UNDERWATER

This handsomely budgeted sea-movie seems hellbent on reminding you of other, better films all through its punchy runtime. The plot is 'The Abyss'-lite, the horror beats feel cadged from 'Alien' and the seafood-looking CG monsters appear to have been liberated from a bin behind an Iceland. It's a shame, because it starts promisingly with a subsea drilling station hit by a suspicious quake and one majestically gory offing. Kristen Stewart is decent as the Ellen Ripley-like focal point too, but the characterisation is thin and 'Underwater' can't decide if it wants to be a monster movie or a disaster flick. It sinks between two stools: too unfocused for the former; not scary enough for the latter. Phil de Semlyen



PLUS ONE

Weddings! What joyous things they are. Or not, depending on your feeling about small talk, enforced fun and 'YMCA' by the Village People. This American indie romcom glides around two unattached friends, Ben (Jack Quaid) and Alice (Maya Erskine), who accompany each other to a succession of nuptials. Of course, it's only a matter of time before they fall for each other. 'Plus One' leans heavily on the likeability of its leads, opting for low-key laughs rather than big yucks. It's not easy to make a romcom feel effortless, and if this stab at the genre is a bit self-conscious and formulaic in a Netflix-landfill kinda way, it's sweet and sincere. It's a formula, sure, but it's a formula that still works. Alex Godfrey



DANIEL ISN'T REAL

If this was the '90s, this would be one of those films you'd stumble on in the video store and tell all your friends about. Forget the terrible title, Adam Egypt Mortimer's sharp-edged, ambitious little indie about a young man, Luke (Miles Robbins), who has a freaky imaginary friend called Daniel is a neat blend of psychological horror and comingof-age drama. Patrick Schwarzenegger channels Patrick Bateman as a psycho frat-boy presence, but the standout here is Sasha Lane ('American Honey') as the art student Luke falls for. The film is at its most fun when it keeps us guessing. Is Daniel a real demon or just a figment of Luke's psyche? Only when it tries to settle on an answer to that do things get predictable. Greer McNally



Music & Nightlife

Edited by Oliver Keens timeout.com/music @timeoutmusic

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH Greentea Peng

Sorry, Greentea who?

'Peng', as in, 'Cor, Ilove what you've done with your room and those Himalayan salt lamps, it's well peng'. And 'green tea' because it's her favourite drink, silly. This south London singer also lives near Penge, which has a lovely sonic lilt to it, don't you think?

Quite. I'm getting some spiritual vibes from her look too.

Well she's definitely into incense, and her music does sound a bit zen. But it's also introspective and downbeat – a searching alternative to a lot of hype party sounds around at the moment. She sings about feeling bummed and oppressed by the city over spectral jazz and raspy blues. You can hear influences of Erykah Badu and Lauryn Hill but also Ms Dynamite, Finley Quaye – remember him? – and dubby soundsystem culture on her two EPs, 'Rising' and 'Sensi'.

What else has she been up to?

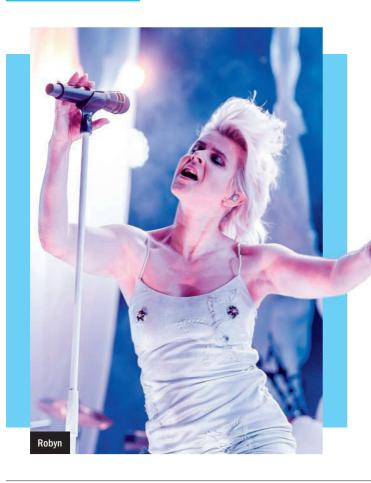
Lots. As well as releasing brilliant singles like 'Miss Da Sun', timely spoken word freestyles like 'Bun Boris' and notching up more than 3 million views with her performance of 'Downers' on

She's a searching alternative to a lot of hype party sounds around at the moment

taste-making YouTube channel Colors, she's been working with drum'n' bass overlord Goldie and Mike Skinner of The Streets. Live, she supported Neneh Cherry on tour last year and has headline shows in March. And to kick off 2020, she won Breakthrough Act at Gilles Peterson's Worldwide Awards – which is impressive, all things considered.

Why's that?

Well, she's only been a professional musician for just over a year. The story goes that she was working on the beach in Mexico where she was 'discovered'. Her manager saw her singing a Lily Allen song in a bar with the house band and took her on immediately. Who needs 'The X-Factor', eh? ■ Kate Hutchinson → Greentea Peng plays Jazz Cafe on Mar 26.



FESTIVAL NEWS

Lovebox adds Robyn, JME and loads more

WITH PROGRAMMING that

always delivers serious bang for your buck, Lovebox has become one of London's very best festivals over the last 19 years. **Disclosure**,

Tyler, The Creator and R&B prodigy Khalid are already confirmed as headliners. Now, a fantastic batch of new acts – including Robyn, Fatboy Slim and vegan grime icon JME – have been added too. Other just-announced acts heading to Gunnersbury Park (Lovebox's home since 2018) include hip hop queen Tierra Whack, producer Kaytranada, Brit Award-winning rising star Celeste, R&B singer Snoh Aalegra, dance-pop's woman of

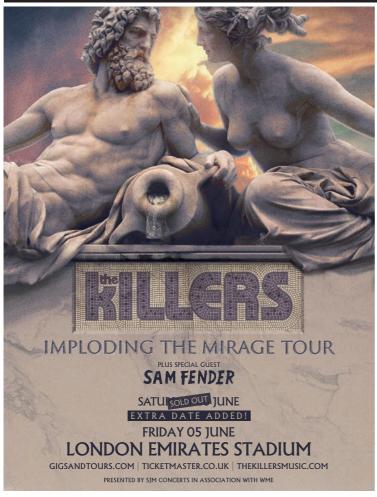
the moment **Georgia** and jazz-funk innovators **BadBadNotGood**. Also hot off the press are a DJ set from **Chase & Status**, Ladbroke Grove hip hop queen **Lava La Rue**, offbeat electro composer **Wuh Oh**, Philly singer-songwriter **Pink Sweats** and a gaggle of great DJs including **Sherelle**, **Annie Mac**, **Louise Chen** and Balearic sage **DJ Harvey**.

As this stacked line-up suggests, Lovebox is expanding to become a three-day festival again in 2020 after five years as a two-dayer. Stay tuned for further announcements, but for now, 2020's episode is shaping up to be a cracker.

Nick Levine

→ Lovebox takes place at Gunnersbury Park on Jun 12-14 2020.





















In a nutshell:

The venue formerly known as Hoxton Square Bar & Kitchen has been reimagined as a multi-disciplinary culture hub that still serves decent food.

Where is it?

On leafy Hoxton Square, the Shoreditch patch that's also home to indie gig venue Zigfrid von Underbelly.

What's the vibe?

Shoreditch may be less edgy than it once was, but Colours (along with The Book Club and The Old Blue Last) still makes it pop. This new club and bar places massive emphasis on an events line-up celebrating London's diverse communities. Craving a queer Bollywood hip hop party or a dirty storytelling openmic night? Colours has got it.

What makes it a great venue?

It's a new east London venue with a 2am licence. Given the capital's challenging nightlife climate, that's not to be sneered at. Then there's the stonking sound system, cool light installation and the fact you can do pretty much anything here: do some neon-lit life-drawing, nosh delicious street food, check out new bands or turn up at half midnight for the sesh.

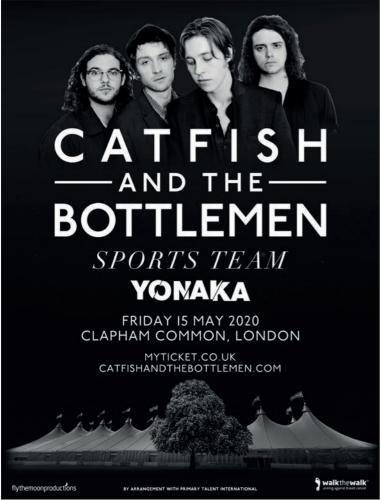
What's the booze situation?

There's a colourful cocktail list (we love a theme), a pint of Estrella is a fiver and a house G&T is £4.90.

What's coming up soon?

Hotly-tipped Leeds indie band Rae play their first London headline gig here on Friday. Then check out Misery Party, a sober club night for the LGBTQ+community, on February 25. ■ Adam Bloodworth → Colours is at 2-4 Hoxton Square, N1 6NU. Hoxton Overground.

More venues at **timeout.com/music**











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FESTIVAL NEWS

Wireless has A\$AP, Skepta and Meek Mill

wireless is one of the most outrageously successful festivals in the world. Though it began rather randomly in 2005 as a general melange of indie and dance names (Hard-Fi! Mylo! James Blunt!), it has mutated into the defining festival for rap, hip hop and grime fans. While the 2020 line-up is disappointingly male-centric, it is still an impressive platter of the best of US and UK rap.

Headlining across the three days will be cheekboned rap hero **A\$AP Rocky**, Tottenham's finest, **Skepta**. and Philly icon **Meek Mill**. Joining A\$AP is the mad popular two-piece Lewisham phenomenon known as **D-Block Europe**, 'Futsal Shuffle' star **Lil UziVert**, **Young Thug** and **Playboi Carti**. Masked UK rhymer **M Huncho** and buzzy Americans like **Trippie Redd** and **Lil Tjay** will be there too.



Back on the headline hype after topping Field Day last year is Skepta, who will be supported on Saturday by massively hot, melody-rich rapper Roddy Ricch, who's been riding a massive wave of praise for his honest raps on life's highs and lows. As well as the West Coaster are Nigerian superstar Burna Boy, Da Baby, Mostack and Hardy Caprio, plus Koffee and Doja Cat (some women, finally!) and Manchester's Aitch, among others.

Then for Meek Mill's Sunday slot, UK titan AJ Tracey will be playing, along with Lil Baby, A Boogie wit da Hoodie, Lil Tecca, Steel Banglez, Nav and NLE Choppa, to round off starry weekend. Tickets are on sale now and if the last few years have taught us anything, it's that Wireless is a dead cert to sell out. **Diver Keens**

→ Wireless takes place in Finsbury Park on Jul 3-5.



GIGS AND CLUBS

JUST ANNOUNCED

AMP London

Lianne La Havas,
Caroline Polachek,
Avelino, The Magic
Gang and The Murder
Capital lead a raft of
new acts announced
for Annie Mac's
four-day, multivenue, cross-genre
celebration of all
things musical.
→ Various venues. Mar 4-7.

Little Dragon

A day before they drop their sixth album 'New Me, Same Us,' the genre-blending Swedish electro band play a big London headline show.

→ 02 Academy Brixton. Mar 26.

Elrow'art

A new music-y art experience, mashing up the Spanish party strand with street art don Okuda San Miguel.

→ Roundhouse. Apr 11.

Gods of Rap II

Everyone loves a sequel, and this reprise of last year's mature B-Boy supergig sees Nas, DMX, The Lox (aka Jadakiss and pals) plus Gangstarr and host Just Blaze all sharing the same stage.

 \rightarrow The 02. Apr 24.

Propaganda

A weekend of music, art and spoken word, curated by a titan of the London jazz scene, Shabaka Hutchings.

→ Barbican and other London venues. May 8-10.

Nerina Pallot

The cult singersongwriter who's written for Kylie and Diana Vickers plays an intimate gig at a new King's Cross venue.

→ Lafayette. Jun 12.

Sting

After Madonna's run of intimate Palladium shows, Sting follows suit by bringing his career-spanning 'My Songs' show to town.

→ Palladium. Sep 17-19.

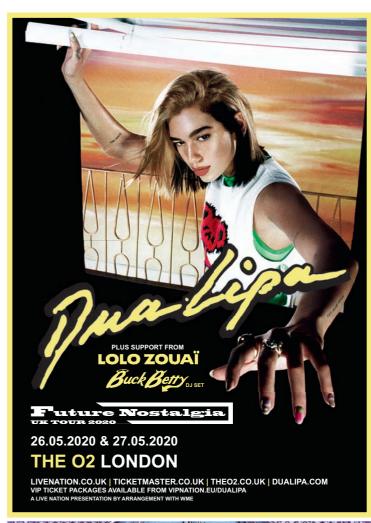


Kings Of Leon

The rock titans are headlining a huge outdoor show in Finsbury Park one (hopefully) sunny Sunday in June. A resurgent Courteeners plus Cage The Elephant, Inhaler, Soccer Mommy and The Big Moon support.

> Finsbury Park. Jun 28.

Buy tickets at **timeout.com/gigs**







FESTIVAL SPECIAL







LONDON FESTIVALS

We Are FSTVL

Patrick Topping and Erick Morillo have just been added to the fast-selling fest.

→ Damyn's Hall Aerodrome, Upminster. May 23-24.

South West Four

Clapham's annual bank holiday banger offers Major Lazer, Stefflon Don and The Streets.

→ Clapham Common. Aug 29-30.

Cross the Tracks

Additions to this soulful Sunday include Madlib and Sudan Archives.

→ Brockwell Park. Jun 7.

UK FESTIVALS

Kendal Calling

Head to the Lake
District for lovely
views, obvs, plus tunes
from Supergrass,
Foals, Stereophonics,
Craig David and more.
→ Lowther Deer Park, Cumbria.
Jul 30-Aug 2.

Truck Festival

The boutique weekender has booked acts including Bombay Bicycle Club, The Kooks, La Roux... and 'Barryoke feat Shaun Williamson'. → Hill Farm, Oxfordshire. Jul 31-Aug 2.

Lost Village

Fancy spending the August bank holiday weekend with Bonobo, Floating Points and Honey Dijon? Course you do. This fun-packed naughty Norfolk hideaway is calling,

→ Norton Disney, Lincolnshire. Aug 27-30.

Love Saves the Day

Orbital, Kano, Peggy Gou, Fisher, Krept & Konan, DJ EZ and Goldie are among the first acts announced for this beats-focused Bristol fest.

→ Eastville Park, Bristol.
May 23-24.

El Dorado

This cute weekender celebrates its fifth year with Earth, Wind & Fire, Skream, Kojey Radical, D Double E and Sherelle.

→ Eastnor Castle Deer Park, Herefordshire. Jul 2-5.

EU FESTIVALS

Roskilde

Faith No More and FKATwigs join Anderson . Paak, Kacey Musgraves, Taylor Swift and Thom Yorke for the Danish marvel's fiftieth anniversary. Don't forget: it's also the only festival with an annual 'Naked Run' in the campsite.

→ Roskilde, Denmark. Jun 27-Jul 6.

Love International

Join the fifth instalment of this Croatian beach-straddling suncream fest, which offers Call Super playing back to back with Objekt.

→ Tisno, Croatia. Jul 15-21.

North Sea Jazz Festival

This Dutch festival doesn't just offer lashings of jazz, it's wrangled titans of the soul-iverse too, including Diana Ross, Alicia Keys and Lionel Richie – plus Gregory Porter and George Benson.

→ Ahoy, Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Jul 10-12.



SBOYO O'CONNOB / AEE / BA IMAGES

Theatre & Dance

Edited by Andrzej Łukowski timeout.com/theatre @timeouttheatre

TIME OUT MEETS

Weaving

The Aussie legend on dark NT drama 'The Visit' and why Elrond is 'just a clothes horse'

FAMOUS FOR ICONIC roles in 'The Matrix', 'The Lord of the Rings' and more, Hugo Weaving is also a renowned stage actor back home in Australia. He makes his National Theatre debut in Tony Kushner's new version of Friedrich Dürrenmatt's 'The Visit'. In it, Lesley Manville's wealthy Clara returns to her depressed hometown with a proposition: she'll turn its fortunes around if the townsfolk kill her ex, Weaving's Albert.

How did you end up doing this play?

'Idon't know! A play a year in Sydney is usually enough for me. But I read it and loved it and the window was there and against all my normal judgement I did it and I'm very happy I have.'

Who is Albert? Does he actually deserve to die?

'He's just an ordinary guy really, and as a young man he and Clara had an extraordinary instinctive animal passionate togetherness. But then she became pregnant, and he freaked out and denied paternity. He knows he's done something shitty and lived with the pain of it, and that's kind of punishment enough. But he doesn't understand how much he destroyed her, and how much what she has become is a reaction to those events.'

'I've got a pretty healthy sense of insecurity'

'The Visit' paints a disturbing view of democracy's

limits - is it pure fantasy?

'This stuff happens all the time! The idea of a common good necessarily means that society is going to abandon particular individuals. This play takes that idea to its logical conclusion.'

Some would argue democracy has failed Australia with regards to your government's climate-change policy and the current bushfire season...

'It's deeply disturbing. Our prime minister walked into parliament with a lump of coal saying "There's nothing to be afraid of." I couldn't believe that we elected these people again, they're the most illegitimate bunch of losers that we've ever had. They didn't deserve to be in power, but they got back in. It's a tragic, appalling, I would say criminal, government.

You've been in some very successful films... did they change your life?

'Not really. It's funny. For me, they were pretty anomalous. I really loved them, particularly working with the Wachowskis on the "Matrix" films. But I've got a pretty healthy sense of insecurity so I don't feel like my life's changed, no!'

Did it impact your kids, growing up with Elrond as a dad?

'I was always just "dad". And I didn't work much abroad when they were at school. I only needed to fly out to New Zealand for a couple of weeks here and there. Elrond's just a clothes horse, really; mostly he was there for exposition.' \blacksquare

→ 'The Visit'. National Theatre. ↔ Waterloo. Until May 13.



By Andrzej Łukowski Who has no real problem with the 'Matrix' sequels.

Faustus: That Damned Woman



IN CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE'S

'Doctor Faustus', scholar antihero Johann Faust famously dicks around with the power he has traded his soul for, squandering his years of omnipotence on stuff like playing practical jokes on the pope.

Chris Bush's contemporary take on the myth, 'Faustus: That Damned Woman', asks (kind of) what a woman might have done with that power. And the answer - in this co-production between Headlong and the Lyric - is that heroine Johanna Faustus does a lot more. Like, a lot more.

The first half of Caroline Byrne's production is set in midseventeenth-century London, and begins with Johanna's mother being tortured to death by a witchfinder. Set on revenge, Johanna - played with hypnotic intensity by Jodie McNee - summons Lucifer, who she browbeats into giving her 144 years of youth and godlike power (Johann settled for a piffling 24!).

If the first half is a sort of mystical feminist revenge thriller then the second half is a sort of mystical feminist redemption saga, as Johanna resolves to now do good.

There is a 'Doctor Who'-ish quality to it. It's not just the timey-wimey stuff, or the troubled-but-brilliant quasi-immortal heroine, but also the cheerfully gauche treatment of the arc of human history, which Faustus decides to manipulate in order to empower the human race.

That Bush never seems to interrogate the morality of

Johanna's tinkering is one of the things that lost me as the play wore on. Her heroine seems to be presented as an avatar of unbounded female potential... but Johanna also arrogantly guides humanity to the brink of extinction, a fact that is extremely glossed over in moral and emotional terms.

You can take these things too seriously, of course. Like 'Doctor Who', it's a work of entertainment aware of its status as escapism. But its intrinsic frivolity does undermine the more serious bits.

WHAT IS IT... **Meet Johanna** Faust in this genderswapped take on the legend.

WHY GO. It's a fun romp with a great performance from Jodie McNee.

Buy tickets at timeout.com/ theatre

Lyric Hammersmith. Hammersmith. Until Feb 22. £15-£42.

Still, McNee keeps the show on the road, her full-bore charisma really selling even Johanna's wackiest adventures. And she has a fine foil in Danny Lee Wynter's extremely entertaining Mephistopheles, whose camp malevolence agreeably undercuts Johanna's messiah-isms.

It's uneven. But at barely two hours, this is the sort of breezy epic - full of big ideas, unpretentiously realised – that's purely enjoyable enough to style out its silliest bits. ■ Andrzej Łukowski

The Sugar Syndrome



**** The Gift



The first ever revival for the great Lucy Prebble's littleknown debut.

A brilliant turn from newcomer Jessica Rhodes as troubled teen Dani.

Orange Tree Theatre. ORICHMOND. Until Feb 22. £15-£32.



CONSIDERING HER STATURE, and the fact that she's only actually written four plays, it's kind of surprising that Lucy Prebble's debut 'The Sugar Syndrome' remains virtually unknown.

Things are a little clearer when you see it, though. Originally staged in October 2003, it's a drama rooted in a fleeting, pre-social media web age: a time when young people still had stacks of NMEs mouldering away in their bedrooms but were also becoming the first digital natives.

Dani (Jessica Rhodes) is a precocious 17-year-old grappling with an eating disorder and dysfunctional parents. She loiters in chatrooms, where she befriends two men, both of whom she starts to hang out with IRL. There's dweeby 22-year-old Lewis (Ali Barouti), who she enters into a half-hearted sexual relationship with. And there's 38-year-old Tim (John Hollingworth), a convicted paedophile who suddenly becomes Dani's bezzie.

It's effectively Prebble's 'Pablo Honey': a promising enough debut dwarfed by what came next. Certainly, you would never in a million years have predicted she'd come up with the mighty 'Enron' next. It's sharp, but a little dated, with an of-its-time crassness. But Oscar Toeman's revival is worth it, not least because of a terrific stage debut from Rhodes: a perfect study in the fearlessness of adolescence, and also its terrible embarrassment. ■ Andrzej Łukowski

A surreal satire on cultural imperialism.

The super-ambitious third act is where it all comes together.

Buy tickets at timeout.com/ theatre

Theatre Royal Stratford East. → Stratford. Until Feb 15.£10-£35.



WHEN SHE WAS just seven, orphaned Yoruba princess Sarah Forbes Bonetta was given as a 'gift' to Queen Victoria. Janice Okoh's play shows how this girl grew up wrapped in smothering layers of taffetta, tradition and etiquette, her heritage lost. And if 'The Gift' sometimes feels as stilted as an audience with her crinolined Majesty, it's still a convincing study of how colonialists wielded politeness like a weapon.

The play's three acts all centre on the act of tea-drinking. First, Bonetta (Shannon Hayes) teaches the ways of white high society to her maid Aggie (Donna Berlin) in scenes of 'My Fair Lady'-style slapstick. Then the action jumps to the present day, where a black couple have their well-meaning-but-kinda-racist white neighbours over for tea. Okoh's approach can feel like eavesdropping on a table of strangers, struggling to make out the connections over the clatter of cups. But everything crashes into focus in the third act. Bonetta vents the frustrations she's choked down like a stale rock cake. Queen Victoria shows up. And Aggie gazes out into the future in scenes that show the impossibility of pinning down historical figures like butterflies.

This drawing-room drama can feel stodgy in places. But it's fascinating as an exercise in dusting off a tired old genre, sending it spinning through time and space, and trusting the audience to follow. ■ Alice Saville

NEW SHOWS

THE HOTTEST THEATRE OPENINGS THIS WEEK

WEST END

Death of England

Rafe Spall is as a man $mourning\,his\,dad\,in$ this new monologue by Roy Williams and Clint Dyer.

- → National Theatre. → Waterloo. Until Mar 7.
- £33-£61.

Endgame

Not the 'Avengers' blockbuster, but Samuel Beckett's existentialist classic. Daniel Radcliffe and Alan Cumming star. → Old Vic. ↔ Waterloo. Until Mar 28, £12-£65.

Poet in da Corner

A return for Debris Stevenson's hugely fun grime musical.

- → Royal Court Theatre. → Sloane Square. Until Feb 22.
- £12-£35

The Taming of the **Shrew**

Globe boss Michelle Terry and her actor husband Paul Ready star in Shakespeare's battle of the sexes.

- → Shakespeare's Globe. O Blackfriars, Until Apr 18.
- £7-£62.

The Wedding **Singer**

Kevin Clifton off 'Strictly' gives his vocal

chords a workout in this romcom musical. → Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre. → Wembley Park. Until Mar 1, £10-£65.

OFF-WEST END

Albion

The Almeida marks Brexit with Mike Bartlett's weird but compellingstudyofa fragmented England.

- → Almeida Theatre.
- → Highbury & Islington. Until Feb 29. £10-£42.50.

Autoreverse

Florencia Cordeu's audiovisual look at escaping Argentina.

→ Battersea Arts Centre.

Clapham Junction Overground. Until Feb 22. £10-£12.50.

The Bee in Me

Aten-year-old boy reimagines his life as a video game in this imaginative show. Ages eight to 12.

- → Unicorn Theatre.
- → London Bridge. Until Mar 1. £10-£22, £6-£16 concs.

Collapsible

Margaret Perry's hit monologue of millennial malaise.

- → Bush Theatre.
- → Shepherd's Bush Market. Wed Feb 5-Mar 14. £10-£25.

2 Hamilton

This massively catchy show is a box office smash.

TOP-SELLING

TICKETS

ATTIMEOUT.COM/TICKETS

1 Uncle Vanya

Toby Jones plays the moody

title role in Chekhov's classic.

Harold Pinter Theatre. Until May 2.

Victoria Palace Theatre. Until Jun 20.

3 Cyrano de Bergerac James McAvoy plays the huge-conked hero.

> Playhouse Theatre. Until Feb 29

4 Leopoldstadt

A look at Vienna's Jewish quarter from Tom Stoppard.

Wyndham's Theatre. Until Jun 13.

5 Everybody's Talking About Jamie

The hit drag queen musical. Apollo Theatre. Until Aug 29.

FOR TICKETS TO THE BEST SHOWS AT GREAT PRICES

EXCLUSIVE

Get half-price tickets to Adam Kay's 'This Is Going To Hurt',

TIMEOUT.COM/ADAMKAY



The Haystack

Al Blyth's debut play is a thriller about cybersecurity.

- → Hampstead Theatre.
- → Swiss Cottage. £18-£30. Until Mar 7.

The Invitation

Don a mask and solve a crime at this immersive murdermystery show.

→ Town Hall Hotel.

Cambridge Heath Overground. Until Apr 5. £39.99-£119.99.

Time and Tide

James McDermott's comedy explores the pains of growing up gay in a small Norfolk seaside town.

→ Park Theatre. ← Finsbury Park. Wed Feb 5-Feb 29. £14.50-£18.

EXCLUSIVE

'THE HAYSTACK' AT HAMPSTEAD THEATRE



Two computer whizzes find themselves working for the government in Al Blyth's debut play. They're meant to be propping up national cybersecurity, but soon things go awry in this explosive thriller. Get up to 53 percent off tickets, from just £15.

TIMEOUT.COM/THEHAYSTACK

Ts&Cs apply.



Art& Museums

Edited by Eddy Frankel timeout.com/art @timeoutart

'Mushrooms: The Art, Design and Future of Fungi'



PR for decades. They're either the grey coagulated slop in cheap supermarket soup or dream fuel for all the dreadlocked white guys you tried to avoid at university.

sometimes literally, if you catch

Mycophiliaisthe love of mushrooms, and it's blooming. Mushrooms are now recognised for the important role they play in maintaining the planet's biodiversity, for their nutritional value and for their mind-altering powers. The little spore-bearing blobs have been a big deal in art for centuries, and

Mycelial meanderings in art, design and science.

When it gets it right, this show is magic.

Somerset House. → Temple. Until Apr 26. Free.

this show is a trip into the cultural significance of fungi. From John Cage records to books about getting high, Cy Twombly drawings to mushroom-infused death suits, it's all here.

Look at this three-room show as an introduction to mushrooms in art, science and design. The walls are

dotted with statements about stems and caps and gills, facts and figures about mycelial networks and how DNA profiles show mushrooms to be closer to animals than plants.

But the art is the main attraction. Amanda Cobbett's incredibly intricate little sculptures are stunning, Hamish

creepily and hauntingly from burnt toast and stacks of paper, Beatrix Potter's illustrations are lovely, obsessive things. There's a lot of interesting, good stuff here. But what's the main mushroom takeaway? What's this saying about the importance, significance, impact of mushrooms? Not a lot, really, other than that people

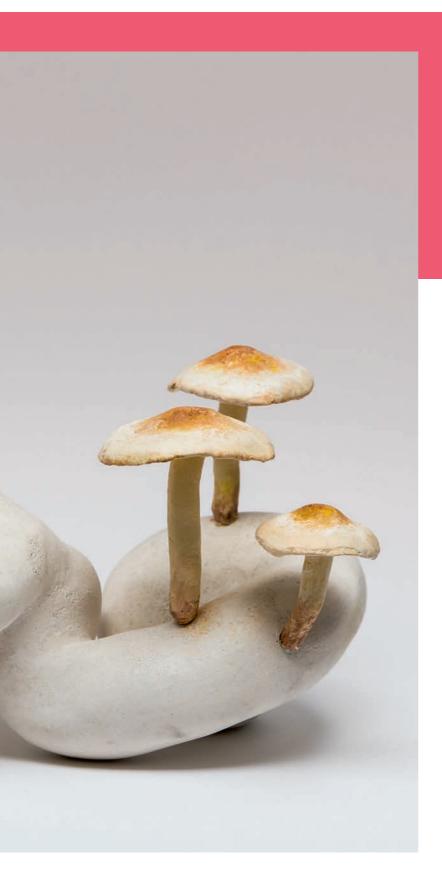


But perceptions are changing,

my psychedelic drift...

Time Out London February 4 -





really like mushrooms, which isn't a particularly groundbreaking statement.

The problem is that by being about art, design and science, it ends up being not enough of any of it. It would works o much better either focused on just one of those topics, or if it was a bigger, bolder, more in-depth show about all three. As it is, it's not much of anything.

You end up wanting more: you wish the galleries were darker, more humid and mushroomy, you just wish there was more of everything. It's an interesting show, but there's a lot of room for improvement. ■



By Eddy Frankel Who isn't a fun-guy. At all.

BEST OF THE BEST

The exhibitions you have to see in London right now



Steve McQueen: 'Year 3'

The Oscar- and Turner Prize-winner's project photographing our city's schoolkids is a thing of absolute joy.

ightarrow Tate Britain. ightarrow Pimlico. Until May 3. Free.



Charlotte Salomon: 'Life? or Theatre?'

Salomon's autobiographical masterpiece is raw and tender feminine brilliance. Heartbreaking and beautiful.

→ Jewish Museum. ← Camden Town. Until Mar 1. £8.50.



'Picasso and Paper'

Works on paper by the world's most famous painter.
Of course it's good. He could make art out of mashed potato and it would still be brilliant.
→ Royal Academy of Arts. ↔ Piccadilly Circus. Until Apr 13. £18-£22.



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Christine Rebet: 'Time Levitation'



CHRISTINE REBET'S ART looks cute. In her hand-drawn animated films you'll find blossoming flowers, galloping horses, old-timey parlour games and neat rows of uniformed girls practising cheerleading in front of a screen. There are scaly reptile feet, ruby red high heels for a grown-up Dorothy and a small, exquisitely detailed kimono.

Yeah, it all looks cute. But 'looks' is the operative word. All six of the short animations on display here deliver hammer blows to the sugary, whimsical world it initially seems you've walked into.

It opens with 'Brand Band News',

a creepy, hypnotic parable about twin sisters in blue gingham dresses who, after being gunned down, spend some version of the afterlife hitchhiking across the American West.
Gunfire rat-a-tat-tats out while sweet images of the good ole US of A scroll by.

A disconcerting lack of reaction to extreme

circumstances also characterises 'The Black Cabinet', a work centred on a group of frilly, plumed aristocrats sitting around a games table in the nineteenth century. They summon visions via a seance, but the futuristic ghosts that rise up take the form of a Mussolini-like dictator.

There's also a wordless projection about the Arab Spring, and a retelling of an ancient myth with links to a site in Iraq where British Museum academics are working alongside Iraqi archaeologists. Even the least obviously political work is really a reflection on animals-into-plants-into-humans-into-animals.

But the most interesting is 'In the Soldier's Head', Rebet's film about her father's PTSD after the Algerian War. Dreamy half-pictures expand, bleed, pool and reform into new shapes, desert flowers into a headless odalisque and so on. Cute?

No. Surrealistically beautiful? Absolutely.
Rosemary Waugh

WHAT IS IT...

Hand-drawn, seemingly adorable animations.

WHY GO

This is powerful, political art.

→ Parasol Unit. O Old St. Until Mar 26. Free.

NORTH GREENWICH TUBE

'American Pastoral'



THE AMERICAN DREAM is always on the verge of collapse. That's the point of it, it's a dream: something far away, unreachable. Try to grasp it and it'll slip through your fingers. Artists have tangled with it ever since the country's foundation, and this neat little show looks at the ones who pull at its countless threads of hope and optimism to reveal the truth beneath.

There are big names here: Warhol, Koons, Frankenthaler, Ruscha. And lots of the work is lovely. The Helen Frankenthaler especially is gorgeous – a green vista dotted with red and black splodges, like someone exploded a Monet. There's a lot of pleasantness going on: bucolic

nineteenth-century landscapes by Albert Bierstadt and Joseph DeCamp, a lovely little Edward Hopper seascape.

But those images are just the unreachable American utopia, and the overwhelming sense in this show is one of foreboding: of a nation struggling to hold itself together, of cracks starting to show, of the mask starting to slip. You've got a Roy Lichtenstein's ideal little Pop Art house next to Sally Mann's hauntingly empty Southern home; the hopeful vision of John Frederick Kensett's Niagara Falls next to



WHAT IS IT...
Art about the
American dream.

WHY GO..

Warhol, Koons, Frankenthaler? Dreamy.

→ Gagosian Britannia St.→ Kings Cross.Until Mar 14. Free.

Thomas Cole's desolate stormy seas. Then Ed Ruscha lays out the reality of a nation built grubbily on industry, Richard Prince steals from the muckiest corners of pop culture, John Currin idealises and exaggerates sexuality, Cindy Sherman satirises through dress-up.

The Jeff Koons sculpture is odiously, powerfully naff and you

do get the feeling that the gallery's just trying to shift a whole heap of stuff they couldn't sell with a lot of the work here, but it's a solid concept, and there are some really great pieces on show. But the thing that makes the exhibition worth coming to see is the tension. Promise and disappointment, hope and despair, all balancing on a knife edge. Then you walk out the door, and you realise that the awkward terror of the American is eerily familiar in the Britain of 2020. Yikes. ■ Eddy Frankel

France-Lise McGurn: 'Percussia'



THE PAINTINGS HAVE leached off the canvas in France-Lise McGurn's exhibition. They've spread across the walls: her nude, imagined figures have been left sprawled throughout the gallery like they've come alive in the night and frozen on sight, like in that Ben Stiller movie set in a museum, but a lot more naked.

It's uncomplicated but very pretty art. With perfectly confident brushstrokes, McGurn delineates the bare essence of the forms she depicts. A single curve traces a line from the crook of the knee to the base of the neck, a smudge of red is lips, a smear of blue is an eye. It's all soft colours: fleshy inks, sunny yellows. Her faces are statuesque, halfway between Grecian busts and 1920s make-up ads.

But what makes them really good is their sense of intimacy. These are like visions from McGurn's mind, snapshots of fantasies and



imaginations that she's letting you into. Just as the figures have moved off the canvas and on to the walls, you feel like they're about to leap straight into your eyeballs and crawl their way into your mind.

These aren't especially thrilling works. But they're gorgeous, intoxicating paintings that drag you into their intimate world, and you might never want to leave. ■ Eddy Frankel

Find more shows to see at timeout.com/art

WHATISIT

Intimate, sprawling nudes.

WHY GO.

These are paintings that drag you in and don't let you go.

→ Simon Lee. → Green Park. Until Feb 22. Free.



SIX OF THE BEST

Spanish restaurants

Gone are the days of sad tourist patatas: the cooking of Spain is thriving in the capital. Here are our fave places for a food fiesta

Barrafina Adelaide Street

It's worth enduring the queue for this no-bookings tapas star: flawless cooking is a given. Your money might go further in Spain, but who cares when the chefs can dole out dazzlers such as oozing tortillas and milk-fed lamb sweetbreads to go with picks from a knockout regional wine list? Find equally swish branches at Dean Street, Drury Lane and King's Cross.

Copita

Like its sister Barrica in Fitzrovia, Copita deals in proper tapas-sized dishes and neatly sidesteps the usual clichés in favour of less familiar ideas, like smoked anchovies with pork crackling, or courgette tortilla with piquillo sauce. Drinkers are encouraged to have several small glasses Barrafina (copitas) from a

well-informed list of Spanish wines and sherries. It's a popular spot, and can get noisy, although service is always in tune with the atmosphere.

→ 27 D'Arblay St. W1F 8FP

→ Tottenham Court Rd.

The Counter at Sabor

Sabor, the first solo gaff from Nieves Barragán Mohacho (Barrafina's onetime leading lady) is an absolute blast: especially if you bag a spot at the no-bookings ground-floor Counter (the bookable El Asador lives upstairs). The rustic small plates are terrific, from tortilla made with salt cod to

a dreamy rhubarband-mascarpone tartaleta. You'll love the food, but you'll also love the vibe: eating here is such fun. → 35-37 Heddon St, W1R 4RR

OPICCADILLY CITCUS.

Tucked into a tiny Basque enclave in Marylebone, Lurra is the baby sister of Donostia just down the road. Lap up the buzzy atmosphere and smoky aromas as you pick from a menu of rustic-luxe tapas and pintxos inspired by the bars of San Sebastián. Don't miss daily specials

Spawned from José Pizzaro's

namesake restaurant further

along Bermondsey Street, this

tapas bebé has the genuine feel

of a rustic Spanish hangout - all

plain brick walls, timbers, tiles

and stools. There are no great

culinary innovations; instead,

enjoy fantastically fresh renditions

of the classics at fair prices, coupled

with fine-quality wines by the glass.

You can't book, but José's doors-

the neighbourhood.

O London Bridge.

Lurra

→ 104 Bermondsey St, SE1 3UB.

wide-open attitude is bang-on for

such as spinach croqueta with spring onion aioli. Just remember to come on payday - prices are topend, but the quality is high, too.

→ 9 Seymour Place, W1H 5BA. ← Marble Arch.

MariTerra

Sandwiched between the railway arches near Waterloo station, this long-serving and totally unpretentious tapas joint inhabits the shell of an old boozer - and, happily, it still feels like a friendly local rather than a scenester's hangout. Much of the wide-ranging menu is gluten-free and all the tapas standards are capably handled, from finger-sized boquerones, moist tortilla and juicy grilled chorizo to saffron rice packed with juicy shrimps, squid and octopus. Agenuine hidden gem. ■

→ 14 Gambia St, SE1 0XH . ↔ Southwark.

More Iberian inspiration at timeout.com/spanish

The Grand Duchess



When you first hear the words 'canalboat seafood restaurant' you may make a few assumptions: the boat will be heading somewhere, it'll be a bit wobbly, and you will see a lot of ducks. In the case of The Grand Duchess, you'd be right on the last one: there are a lot of ducks. The Grand D, while technically afloat, is so firmly moored to the canal path that there's not a trace of an underfoot tremor (and it's not going anywhere). Once inside, though, there's a boatload of not-too-twee nautical charm, plus long horizontal glass windows running down both sides. On the starboard/canal path side, you can sit at proper tables, but the people-watching is nothing special. Instead, ask to sit at the counter, on the port (ie canal) side. Duck-watching (and geese and moorhens and the odd swan) is so much more rewarding.



WHAT IS IT... A canalboat seafood restaurant in Paddington.

WHY GO... For kick-ass cuttlefish and a spot of birdwatching.

→ Sheldon Square,
W2 6PY. → Paddington.

The food is good, though no better than you'd get at a half-decent dinner party. We swooned at the decadent chocolate and pistachio tart, with its scoop of 'pearl of the south' (a pistachio and almond ice cream from Hackney Gelato). Also excellent: a beautifully balanced starter of tender cuttlefish, tumbled together with fennel, fresh parsley and the heat of red chilli. And crisp-skinned sea bass over a heap of

warm and tangy puy lentils, strung through with 'nduja and chard. But while a beetroot, taleggio and walnut salad was perfectly pleasant, our £29 turbot arrived with an unwelcome layer of tasteless fat.

Still, the young staff are sweet and friendly, the music straight out of a Sunday coffee shop. And there are lots of ducks. ■ Tania Ballantine Dinner for two with drinks and service: around £125.

EXCLUSIVE

Get 65 percent off two cocktails, a burger and fries or mac 'n' cheese at **Manetta's Bar** in Mayfair.

TIMEOUT.COM/MANETTAS

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Going out? Try here.









AQUA KYOTO SAYS:

'Overlooking Regent Street, Aqua Kyoto offers authentic Japanese food, carefully crafted cocktails and a rooftop terrace. A transformational makeover has delivered sleek lines of marble and brass contrasting with deep blue velvet banquettes. This hidden gem has newly created dishes with highlights being the lunchtime bento boxes and edomae sushi.'

Fifth floor, 30 Argyll St, W1B 3BR.

B&H GARDEN ROOM SAYS:

'Weekend Brunch. On a rooftop. With wraparound views of the capital from the tenth floor. Yep, it's time to banish February's winter blues with weekend brunch at B&H Garden Room on Charing Cross Road. Join us in some stunning surroundings for a weekend brunch with a difference, complete with panoramic views of London.'

10th floor above Assembly Hotel, 31 Charing Cross Rd, WC2H OLS.

MERCER ROOF TERRACE IGLOOS SAYS:

'This winter, Mercer Roof Terrace has launched its very own igloo dining pop-up. Our two transparent domes can accommodate up to seven people each, offering a unique private dining experience high above the City of London. The setting is warm and cosy, with faux-fur blankets, flickering candles and the twinkle of city lights all around.' Mercer Roof Terrace, Vintry & Mercer Hotel, 19-20 Garlick Hill, EC4V 2AU.

THE CAVENDISH

'Elegant and ageless, The Cavendish feels like it is part of the very fabric of Marylebone. With a wide selction of diverse spaces, The Cavendish is perfect for everyone, whether you're coming to visit us for an espresso while reading the paper on our terrace, dining from our exquisite Mediterranean menu or trying one of our mouth-watering cocktails.'

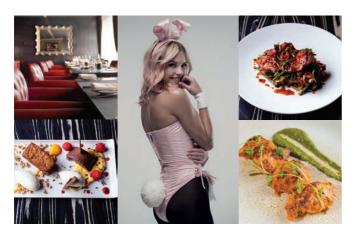
35 New Cavendish St, W1G 9TR.

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EXCLUSIVE

FRUIT-AND-VEG BOXES FROM ODDBOX



Oddbox picks up oddly shaped fruit and veg (plus surplus 'normal' looking produce that the supermarkets don't need) and delivers it to your door in sustainable packaging. You can try it now from just £3.78 per box – that's 60 percent off.

TIMEOUT.COM/ODDBOX

Ts&Cs apply



Kiss My Grass



STRANGE AS IT sounds, it can be difficult to come across a vegan restaurant serving up a decent selection of vegetables. It's often easier to find seitan cooked 17 ways than a plate of plants. Fulham-ish vegan spot Kiss My Grass swerves this issue, defiantly ignoring fake meat – even tofu and jackfruit – and focusing on veg. The line-up includes gnocchi with sauces, filled gyoza, bowls of dhal and a few variations on cauliflower and aubergine.

There are no sides or starters, but after ordering we were swiftly gifted some marvellous, toasted flatbread and equally marvellous baba ganoush that was better than some I've had in Middle Eastern restaurants.

The fun continued with excellent gnocchi: fluffy on the inside but with just the right level of bite, served with a subtly sweet cinnamon squash sauce. It didn't try to do anything clever and tasted all the better for it.

Roasted aubergine with pearl barley wasn't quite as impressive, but was still decent. A 'spiced cream cheeze' topping was a little plain and seemed unnecessary on such a vegetable-driven menu, but both aubergine and barley were cooked and flavoured well.

Dessert was a bready affair – banana bread, and fig-and-date bread – as, sadly, there weren't any chocolate brownies left. Both were enjoyable enough, even though neither supplied the promised hit of spice and fruit.

Kiss My Grass is a welcome reminder that vegan restaurants don't need to do junk food to be memorable. Skip the dessert and share an extra main instead. You'll have nailed your five a day, too. ■ *Tristan Parker*Dinner for two with wine and service: around £60.

WHAT IS IT...

A veg-centric vegan restaurant that shuns mock meat.

WHY GO...

For the gnocchi with cinnamon squash sauce. Fluffy and fabulous.

→ 123 Lillie Rd, SW6 7SX.→ West Kensington.

Drink

Edited by Laura Richards timeout.com/bars @timeouteatdrink

Bubbledogs



ANY FAN OF the classic combo of hot dogs and champagne will know that Bubbledogs has been around for over six years. It began as a gourmet hot dog joint that also served sparkling wine by small producers, but now the concept has flipped to make it a fizz-forward bar with a side of sausage.

The makeover sees tall counters out in favour of low marble tables with pouffe seats the yellow of Veuve Clicquot. And the bare brick walls so associated with the decade just past have been painted purple, a neon sign casting a glow across them.

An all-male fleet were pouring when we visited, one of them with a crossbody bag like he was dealing at a festival. It all eschews the starchy champagne bar formula, with a pop soundtrack cementing the vibe.

Prices by the glass aren't as earthshattering as you might expect (£7-£12). There's a catch: one of

these five sparkling wines - the cheapest on the menu - is (*deep breath*) not a champagne. If you're the kind of person who likes to match your bubbly with fast food, you probably won't mind the rulebreaking. And for the purists (and ballers), the by-the-bottle menu is clear as well as comprehensive.

Hot dogs (also from £7) are devilish, including one slathered in $mac\, and\, cheese\, that\, somehow\, isn't$ disgusting. The fizz cuts through it all like a hot knife through butter. Order tater tots draped in a web of comté for further proof that French-American relations are ticking along rather nicely here. ■ Laura Richards

WHAT IS IT...

hot dog bar with a sparkling new lease of life.

WHY GO...

A champagne and

Filthy snacks and an edgy setting old-fashioned fizz

brought up to date.

> 70 Charlotte St,



JUST OPENED



Doña

this pop-up mezcal place with a fluffy pink interior has gone permanent. The latenight bar's real USP is that it champions female-led live music acts, a worthy cause for any bar to back. → 92 Stoke Newington High St, N16 7NY. Rectory Rd Overground

We're frilled that

This whisky-focused bar looks every bit the intimate snug, clad in wood. And you can say you're drinking in Scotland Yard, since it's set inside the new hotel that bears the name of the policing HQ.

→ Great Scotland Yard Hotel, 3-5 Great Scotland Yard, SW1A

Smokey Kudu

Surprisingly, a cocktail bar complete with chandelier has opened under the arches of Queens Road station. It's from the team behind nearby South African restaurant Kudu, so drinks also subtly reference SA. → 133 Queen's Rd, SE15 2ND. Queens Rd Peckham Overground.

DRINK THIS

Foraged Sour



Fancy a bit of ruff? Woodruff to be precise? This vodka sour on the menu at the bar of new restaurant Wilder - located in the basement of east London's Boundary – is symbolic of this venue's really wild ethos. Along with the sweet perennial plant, this cocktail also includes may chang, a small fruit with the citrussy qualities you'd expect in any knockout sour. A woodland take on the mouth-puckering tipple. ■ → Boundary, 2-4 Boundary St, E2 7DD. Shoreditch High St Overground. £10.

Find more hot new hangouts at timeout.com/bars





Newbury

A weekend in

Cosy pubs, canalside walks and grand castles

NEWBURY IS ALWAYS reinventing itself. From ancient wool hub to grain-trading hotbed, the town has morphed its way through the centuries - and it's still doing it in 2020. Between grand houses and endless listed buildings, now you'll find up-and-coming indie restaurants, a market that champions emerging designer-makers and buzzy pubs serving a youngcrowd. And then there's the star attraction for fans of a certain period drama: a nineteenth-century country house with a thoroughly modern-day following.

Drink this

The Lock Stock & Barrel is pulled up so close to the canal that you can sit pint in hand with your legs dangling over the water. For cosy log fires and real ales, head to The Royal Oak at Yattendon - the beer hails from West Berkshire Brewery down the road.

Buy this

Time your visit right and you'll be in town for Newbury Artisan Market, your go-to for local foods, vintage finds and original art. It's usually on the last Sunday of the month.

See this

Brush up on Newbury's backstory at West Berkshire Museum - it's free and housed in the beautiful seventeenth-century Cloth Hall and granary. Afterwards, stop for a cup of loose-leaf darjeeling at Teashop by the Canal, with views of barges and Victoria Park.

Eat this

For posh nosh without the pretence, try Henry & Joe's - the set-lunch menu is as gourmet as it gets, but the place has a low-key bistro vibe and is easy on the bank balance. For dreamy pizzas and creamy gelato head to **Lusso**, or grab a lunch box $from \textbf{The Sushi Maki} \ for salmon \ sashimitogo.$

Explore this

Highclere Castle is just a 15-minute drive from the centre of town. Whether or not you've bingewatched 'Downton Abbey', this extravagant country house - home to the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon - is well worth a nosy. Visit in winter to swerve the crowds of megafans on a special $guided \, tour. \, \blacksquare \, Katie \, Gregory \,$

→ Get there: 50 minutes by train from London Paddington; around one hour 30 minutes by car.

WAKE UP HERE

Vineyard



There's no actual vineyard at this glossy hotel. Instead, everything, from the decor to the spa treatments, revolves around the contents of its impressive 30,000-bottle wine cellar. Relax with a red-grape body massage, sit down to a boozy, seven-course tasting menu with paired wines, then slink back to your vino-tinted room - some are decked out in deep burgundy tones, others are champagne-hued. We'll pray to the god of wine that you don't have to go to work the next day. ■ Katie Gregory

→ Newbury, Berkshire. From £215 a night. www.prideofbritainhotels.com



Thanks to the latest timetable there are now 2 fast trains every hour from Newbury to London.



