

Weekend

TV GUIDE
Pages 40-42

Fiona's time to shine



Former Essex tutor, Fiona Ross is now making her own mark on the music scene. Pages 20-21

MUSIC
FESTIVE FOLK DUO
PREPARING FEAST OF
SEASONAL FUN

PAGE 26



BOOKS
JACK'S NEW
BOOK IS A
DREAM WORK

PAGE 23



CINEMA



Cinema times for Odeon, Head Street, Colchester.

ROBIN HOOD (pictured) (12A)
Fri-Thu: 12.10pm, 3pm, 5.50pm and 8.30pm.
THE GIRL IN THE SPIDER'S WEB (15)
Fri, Mon-Thu: 12pm, 2.50pm, 5.40pm and 8.30pm.
Sat-Sun: 5.40pm and 8.30pm.
NATIVITY ROCKS! (U)
Fri, Mon-Thu: 1pm, 3.30pm and 6pm.
Sat-Sun: 10.30am, 1pm, 3.30pm and 6pm.
FANTASTIC BEASTS: THE CRIMES OF GRINDELWALD 2D (12A)
Fri, Wed: 12.40pm, 1.40pm, 2.30pm, 3pm, 4.50pm, 5.40pm, 7pm, 8pm and 9pm.
Sat-Sun: 11.20am, 12.40pm, 1.40pm, 2.30pm, 3pm, 4.50pm, 5.40pm, 7pm, 8pm and 9pm.
Mon: 12.40pm, 2.30pm, 3.50pm, 4.50pm, 5.40pm, 7pm and 9pm.
Tue: 11.20am, 12.40pm, 2.30pm, 3pm, 4.50pm, 5.40pm, 7pm, 8pm and 9pm.
Thu: 11am, 12.40pm, 2pm, 3pm, 5.10pm, 7.30pm and 8.40pm.
THE GRINCH 2D (U)
Fri, Mon, Wed: 1.30pm, 4pm and 6.30pm.
Sat-Sun: 10.10am, 11.10am, 12.30pm, 1.30pm, 3pm, 4pm and 6.30pm.
Tue: 11.10am, 1.30pm, 4pm and 6.30pm.
Thu: 5pm.
BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY (12A)
Fri-Wed: 2.20pm, 5.20pm and 8.20pm.
Thu: 11.20am, 2.20pm, 5.20pm and 8.20pm.
A STAR IS BORN (15)
Fri, Mon, Wed: 9.10pm.
Thu: 1pm.
WIDOWS (15)
Fri, Sun, Wed: 8.40pm.
Sat: 9.10pm.
Thu: 4pm and 8.40pm.
PLANETA SINGLI 2 SFL (15)
Sat: 8.40pm.
POKEMON THE MOVIE: THE POWER OF US (PG)
Sat-Sun: 10.45am.
Tue: 8.30pm.
THE NUTCRACKER AND THE FOUR REALMS 2D (PG)
Sat-Sun, Tue: 11.40am.
KIDS CLUB
INCREDIBLES 2 2D (PG)
Sat-Sun: 10am.
JOHNNY ENGLISH STRIKES AGAIN (PG)
Sat-Sun: 10am.
OVERLORD (18)
Sun, Tue: 9.10pm.
ODEON SCREEN UNSEEN (15)
Mon: 8.15pm.
SILVER SCREEN
DISNEY'S CHRISTOPHER ROBIN (PG)
Tue: 2pm.
Thu: 11am.
SILVER SCREEN
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE FALLOUT 2D (12A)
Tue: 11am.
Thu: 2pm.
THE KING AND I: FROM THE LONDON PALLADIUM (U)
Thu: 7pm.

By NEIL D’ARCY-JONES
neil.darcy-jones@newsquest.co.uk

SHE’S the tutor who was responsible for the training of the likes of Ed Sheeran, Rita Ora and Jess Glynne.

Now, it’s Fiona Ross’ turn for a shot of the limelight, although it’s not sitting well with her.

“I know it sounds a bit silly,” she laughs, “but, honestly, I feel a little bit selfish at the moment. When your whole life has been about your kids and your students and suddenly it all becomes about you, that does feel a little odd.”

Fiona made the decision to go out on her own two years ago and has not looked back since.

Following the initial buzz about her past students, Fiona’s years of training as well as her days working as a session musician and of course her natural talent to write a great tune has made her a hit with jazz critics and music-lovers alike.

Despite her short time on the circuit, the singer, pianist and composer has fast gained a reputation for her powerhouse live shows and creating a new contemporary jazz sound.

Incorporating fast-paced Latin jazz, a hint of vintage jazz club and a soupçon of soul, allied to her distinctive vocal prowess, her two previous albums, A Twist of Blue and Just Me (And Sometimes Someone Else), have received stellar reviews.

Born and raised in Brentwood, Fiona was destined for a life on the stage with a number of family members having creative careers themselves.

“My mum’s dad had this vaudeville folky Irish act,” she tells me, “and my dad’s mum was an opera singer. Then all of my uncle’s are writers, I mean all of them, except my dad, who along with my mum, was a mathematician.

“I was destined for the stage really. My mum wanted me to be the next Julie Andrews and so I enrolled in Arts Educational School in London, which is where she went, years before me, obviously.”

Enrolled in dance, drama and singing lessons at the age of two, then piano at six, by the age of eight, Fiona was starring in London’s West End, starring as Annie. At the age of 14, she lied about her age and talked her way into gigging in jazz clubs throughout London.

No one even suspected that a voice that startling in its maturity and passion could belong to a singer barely in her teens.

“It was all going so well,” Fiona adds, “and then of course I fell in love and got pregnant, and my life changed dramatically forever.”

Now needing to look after her two children, Fiona’s passion for the stage had to be juggled with looking after them.

“So I went behind the scenes,” she explains, “choreographing, doing a bit of teaching, musical directing, that kind of thing. I’ve been quite lucky that I’ve always been able to earn money through my music. Even when I was 16

It is time for Essex singer and composer Fiona to shine her talented light



Famous pupil - Ed Sheeran.

I remember playing the piano for a local ballet lesson and the parents coming up to me and asking if I would teach their children. Very quickly I had about 50 students, doing one to one piano lessons.”

Eventually Fiona moved back to Essex and began working at Braintree College where

she was a lecturer in musical theatre before becoming head of the creative arts and media department.

She says: “Braintree based band Missing Andy were all my old students from Braintree College and my last album was mixed at HighField Studios, in Great Barfield, which is



Riding high - jazz singer and pianist Fiona Ross coming back to Essex for her latest gig.

owned and run by two of my old Braintree College students.

“I had a lovely time there but I got head hunted with a job I couldn’t really turn down.”

Which was Head of the British Academy of New Music, where she stayed for eight years, and during which time various superstar singers first started off their careers, including Ed Sheeran, Rita Ora and Jess Glynne.

“Sadly this industry is a combination of a lot of things,” Fiona adds. “Obviously talented but also a huge slice of luck and basically putting yourself out there.

“I’ve learnt the hard way because my natural disposition is to hide behind my piano and let the music do the talking but I know in this modern world of social media, you have to let people know what you’re doing.

“Fortunately I’ve been very lucky to have worked with some incredible people. A few years

back I was asked to write a review for a CD and then some interviews, which I did. Then I thought, ‘I wonder if I could get to interview some of the musicians I really admire’ so I contacted their PR’s and I did.”

One of those is Marco Piccioni, an exciting blues, rock and jazz guitarist who has collaborated with numerous high-profile artists, and who will be guesting with Fiona on her latest tour, which arrives in Colchester next weekend.

Also accompanying are her talented young band comprising of Loren Hignell (saxophone), Gibbi Bettini (guitar), Derek Daley (double bass), Marley Drummond (drums) and Ashaine White (backing vocals).

“There’s a whole load of ex-students coming over to Colchester from Braintree,” she says, “and loads of family and friends so it will almost be like a good old fashion home town concert. It’s also



Now it’s her time – Fiona Ross is coming to Colchester Arts Centre

such a great venue with an amazing piano. I can’t wait.”

Fiona Ross is at the Colchester Arts Centre Jazz Club, which takes place at the Church Street venue on Sunday, December 2.

Admission is £14 and £12 for concessions, available from the box office on 01206 500900 or online at colchesterartscentre.com. Doors open at 7pm with the music starting at 7.30pm.

Classics

With Liz Leatherdale



MARTIN James Bartlett (pictured above), the brilliant young British concert pianist who was BBC Young Musician winner in 2014, will be the soloist in Beethoven’s First Piano Concerto accompanied by the Ipswich Symphony Orchestra this weekend.

Since winning this prestigious competition Martin has performed all over the world including a private concert for the First Lady of China and other dignitaries, at the Queen’s 90th Birthday thanksgiving service in St Paul’s Cathedral and at the BBC Proms.

Sibelius’s Fifth Symphony is one of his most inspiring works, and one of my personal favourites, featuring the famous ‘flying swans’ theme in the final movement and ending with one of the finest ‘conductor moments’ in classical music. Hear both Beethoven and Sibelius Saturday evening, November 24, at the Ipswich Corn Exchange at 7.30pm. Tickets are £13 from www.ipswichcornexchange.com

If you can’t get to that orchestral concert, on Sunday there is an evening of Scandinavian music over in Sudbury. Grieg’s Piano Concerto is a firm favourite for both audience and players with its glorious solo lines and soaring lyrical passages.

Nielsen’s first symphony may not be as well-known as the Grieg but it is just as an expressive work. Hear the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra, soloist Jill Morton, conducted by Matthew Andrews on Sunday at 6pm in St Peter’s Church, Market Hill, Sudbury. Tickets are £12.

If you prefer choral music, tomorrow evening Chris Phelps will be conducting the Hadleigh Choral Society accompanied by the Colchester Symphony Orchestra in Haydn’s The Creation at St Mary’s Church, Hadleigh. Chris will be in conducting the Colchester Symphony Orchestra next month back in St Botolph’s Church. More on that soon.

Finally over in Nayland, its choir presents Airs for Armistice tomorrow evening at 7pm in St James Church, Nayland. This concert presents a selection of music by composers working at the time of WW1 and representing a wide variety of the nations involved in the conflict. Tickets are £10.

If you have a forthcoming concert you will like previewed, contact Liz Leatherdale on 0800 999 6994.