



Singing that bursts with joy

By Margaret Crockett

Attending her first Rock Choir rehearsal one January evening, Margaret Crockett found herself in a brightly lit hall full of chattering people. Here she reports on how the evening unfolded.

We sorted ourselves into voice sections and the warm-up started: physical exercises, then fun nonsense songs to get voices going. The choir-mistress began to teach Green, Green Grass, the George Ezra song, each part in turn. She sang a phrase and we repeated it. We learned as children.



Members of Hampstead Rock Choir in rehearsals at their venue in Golders Green. Photo Diane Kenwood

Once all parts of a phrase were learned separately, we came together to sing in harmony, gradually building up to the whole song. As I left, I knew it was just what I needed, a totally absorbing activity that filled me with joy. There was neither audition nor judgement, just familiar popular rock numbers.

Hampstead Rock Choir leader Nicola Cain is an East Finchley resident. She's petite and vivacious, carrying a handyman's work platform in her music kit to ensure she is visible when conducting. She leads two other choirs for Rock Choir Ltd, founded by Caroline Redmond Lusher MBE in 2005.

A classically trained soprano, Nicola sang in the National Youth Choir of Scotland from age eight.

"My voice is my greatest attribute," she says, "I was the kid performing to myself at the top of the slide."

Nicola moved to East Finchley seven years ago to join her partner who grew up here. She explains she welcomed new challenges and more scope for performances. Now also Regional Manager for London, she supports nine evening-working colleagues, all of whom aim to make Rock Choir welcoming and inclusive.

Now in its 16th year and 90-strong, our Choir moved from Hampstead to Golders Green to meet in a larger venue, the Greek Orthodox Cathedral hall. Nicola admits that she is more comfortable with her back to the audience leading and encouraging her choir members

but last November saw her, looking glamorous and sounding amazing, performing with her fellow Rock Choir leaders at the Rock Choir LIVE event in Birmingham.

We have two friendly hard-working prefects, Louise and Abbie, who organise social events. We recently voted Food Bank Aid Finchley as our charity so look out for us at our tube station bucket collection. We will also be performing on Sunday 12 April at the London Landmarks Half Marathon on Westminster Bridge.

Singing is an easy way to switch off from what is around you and do something for yourself but also to meet new people. Free taster sessions are on offer. See <https://rockchoir.com/> for full details.

What's on at the Phoenix in April

By Zalan Pall, general manager

A sci-fi, a classic drama, special Q&A and festival screenings, live score, theatre and ballet plus many more await you at the Phoenix Cinema in April.

The relationship of a happily engaged couple (Zendaya and Robert Pattinson) is put to the test when an unexpected turn sends their wedding week off the rails in *The Drama*, from Friday 3 April.

In French Algeria, Meursault drifts through life and love with mysterious detachment. When he stands accused of murdering an Arab man, indifference is his only alibi in François Ozon's fresh take on Albert Camus's classic novel *The Stranger*, from Friday 10 April.

A visually dazzling space odyssey that's carried along effortlessly by the gravitational pull of Ryan Gosling at his most winning, *Project Hail Mary*, from Friday 10 April, is a near-miraculous fusion of smarts and heart.

On Thursday 16 April, we are screening Kendal Mountain Festival's award-winning adventure films, showcasing daring feats, breathtaking locations, and powerful stories of human resilience. Experience the thrill and excitement from the comfort of your seat and escape into the world's most stunning landscapes and be inspired by the extraordinary journeys of those who dare to explore them.



In *Colours of Time*, from Friday 17 April, four cousins who were previously strangers are brought together by the unexpected inheritance of an abandoned house in Normandy, where they discover a mysterious shared past.

We're screening a few exciting Q&As in April: Exhibition on Screen: Turner & Constable on Friday 10 April, Goodbye Breasts on Wednesday 15 April and *The Conspiracists* on Monday 27 April.

For the lovers of screen arts, we will have RBO Live: *The Magic Flute* on Saturday 21 April, NT Live's *All My Sons* on Monday 23 April, *Power to the People: John & Yoko Live in NYC* on Wednesday 29 April, and *The Lodger* with a live score by Hugo Max on Monday 30 April.

For full details and to book visit our website www.phoenixcinema.co.uk or pop in and see our friendly box office staff.

Review: The Hunt for Moriarty

Artsdepot, North Finchley

By Jessica Holt

The Hunt for Moriarty by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is a gripping story that seamlessly blends suspense with adventure, keeping readers engaged from start to finish. The plot is intricately woven, with many twists and turns.



Mark Knightley as Sherlock and Ben Owora as Dr Watson

Nick Lane, the writer and director of this stage version has amalgamated the novel with several of Conan Doyle's short stories and created an equally complex and evocative experience. It was no surprise to see a very full auditorium at the

Artsdepot in North Finchley to watch The Blackeyed Theatre company bring it to life. In 2024 they had a hit with *The Valley of Fear*, another Sherlock Holmes story. *The Hunt for Moriarty* provides this world-wide touring company with many challenges such as multiple locations. Victoria Spearing, the set designer uses a versatile set to aid this small cast as they travel from place to place. Effective lighting and soundscapes help the transitions from scene to scene. The moving images projected across the back of the stage are imaginative ranging from fast moving trains to Moriarty's threatening notes.

Ben Owora's Dr Watson is entertaining as narrator and also in his role as Holmes's friend and close colleague, adding a humorous tone throughout the

play. This is well contrasted by Mark Knightley's Sherlock with his clipped delivery of lines to match his quick thinking leading to sudden theories as he responds to clues that Watson often fails to notice.

Pippa Caddock plays four roles and achieves clear characterisation with all of them helped by Madeleine Edis, the costume designer. The performance held the attention of the audience and for enthusiasts of the Sherlock Holmes stories it was an interesting and enjoyable piece of theatre. The pace picked up in the second half, but I must say it was too long overall and at times hard to follow. But congratulations must go to the company, now celebrating 20 years together, for their innovation in bringing a wide variety of works to the theatre.



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AT ARTSDEPOT

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COMEDY PREVIEW:
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& KATIE NORRIS
Wed 15 Apr

ROLLERCOASTER
Fri 24 Apr

GARY STEWART'S
GRACELAND
Sat 9 May

...and lots more!
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