

THE ART OF LIVING

EXHIBITION GOOD GRIEF, CHARLIE BROWN!

Somerset House celebrates the enduring influence of Snoopy, Charlie Brown and the *Peanuts* gang, with Charles M. Schultz's drawings shown alongside work from a range of artists.

Schultz's incredibly popular comic strip, which began in 1950 and has been syndicated to 2,600 newspapers in 75 countries, tackled everything from daily joys and anxieties to feminism, faith, race, and the meaning of life.

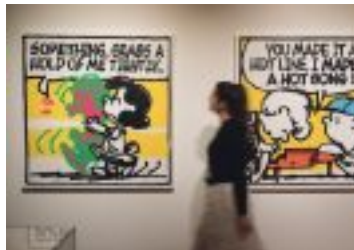
Responses include Fiona Banner invoking Snoopy the Flying Ace versus the Red Baron to comment on the futility of war; Steven Claydon finding a metaphor for cultural associations massing around objects in Pig Pen's cloud of dirt and flies; and Ryan Gander examining Linus's complex psyche.

There's also Ken Kagami's Schultz-referencing fantastical Charpee series, plus Andy Holden – via Charlie Brown – proposing a theory on how art operates after the end of art.

Until March 3
Adults £14, under-12s free
www.somerset-house.org.uk



Collection of Kim Jones's vintage sweaters



Mark Drew's 'Something (Vanilla Ice, Suge Knight)' and 'Take Over (Jay-Z, Nas)'



Pictures: Tim Bowditch/Peanuts/Somerset House

FILM WIDOWS

Steve McQueen's somewhat unlikely follow-up to the Oscar-winning historical drama *12 Years A Slave* is this blistering heist caper, a stylish reboot of Lynda La Plante's Thatcher-era British TV drama about women taking over the robbery their deceased menfolk had planned.

Relocated to Chicago, it's a twists-and-turns neo-noir that blends contemporary cynicism with old-fashioned thrills. The magnificent Viola Davis plays the ringleader's widow, now forced to reckon with his criminal actions.

She's joined by the crack team of Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki, Carrie Coon and Cynthia Erivo – their characters facing challenges ranging from spousal abuse to business desperation

and the everyday struggle to provide for your child.

Together, they take a stand (albeit of the violent variety) for overlooked and mistreated women. *Gone Girl* author Gillian Flynn deftly balances the gender and social commentary with heart-pounding action, plus a political corruption subplot.

There's great support from a rich ensemble, including Jacki Weaver, Liam Neeson, Brian Tyree Henry, Colin Farrell, Robert Duvall, Lukas Haas, and particularly Daniel Kaluuya (fresh off major hit *Get Out*) as a genuinely scary enforcer.

Slick, ambitious and gripping, it's that rare genre film with real heft – both satisfying popcorn entertainment and food for thought.



THEATRE NINE NIGHT



Picture: Helen Murray

Natasha Gordon's remarkable debut, directed by Roy Alexander Weise, gets a welcome transfer from the National Theatre to the West End.

'Nine night' refers to the Caribbean tradition of mourning: a period of music, stories, dancing, food and family. It's a testing time for host Lorraine (now played by Gordon), who nursed her dying mother, and must now endure relatives descending upon her London home.

These include meddling cousin Maggie (the show-stealing Cecilia Noble), who makes sweeping declarations about everything from infallible Jamaican rituals to discrimination in Britain – made more potent by the recent Windrush scandal.

Gordon handles weighty topics, like cultural assimilation, toxic masculinity and the unfolding

layers of grief, with a light touch. It's a piece with both an irresistible funny bone and a big heart.

There are also wonderful turns from Oliver Alvin-Wilson, Hattie Ladbury, Michelle Greenidge and Rebekah Murrell, with Gordon teasing out differences in upbringing and communication through a clever mix of English and West Indian verbal rhythms.

A paean to family, and to the power of communal ritual to release the living, as well as the dead.

Until February 23
Trafalgar Studios, Westminster SW1A
Tickets from £25
www.nationaltheatre.org.uk

COMMUTER CORNER

If your New Year's resolution is to finally begin that new creative project, take inspiration from free *Guardian* podcast *The Start*. Over 10 episodes, great artists reveal all about one early flash of inventiveness, how that foundational project shaped them, and what it means to them now, looking back. Contributors range from Ai Weiwei and Sofia Coppola to Peaches, Damien Hirst and Abi Morgan, and their stories are frank, intimate and vividly engaging.

How are you livening up your commute?
Let us know via Twitter @Move_To



MARIANKA SWAIN SHARES HER CAPITAL CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

FESTIVAL LDN INTERNATIONAL MIME FESTIVAL

This annual event is a thrilling celebration of visual theatre, featuring everything from cutting-edge circus, live art and juggling to puppetry and physical work.

The Barbican Theatre hosts *Vader*, an empathetic tale of ageing from Belgium's Peeping Tom, and Gecko's *The Wedding*, which explores community through spectacular heightened movement.

In the Barbican Pit, Théâtre de l'Entrouvert's *Anywhere* uses an ice puppet for Oedipus, and in the Cinema, enjoy Buster Keaton's *The General*, and *He Who Gets Slapped*, starring silent movie legends Norma Shearer, Lon Chaney and John Gilbert – both with live music accompaniment.

At Jacksons Lane, Plexus Polaire's *Chambre Noire* profiles Andy Warhol shooter Valerie Jean Solanas, while Birmingham-based Stan's Cafe tackles social inequality through *The Capital*, ingeniously staged on moving walkways.



Picture: Richard Haughton

Sadler's Wells highlights include *Thick & Tight* conjuring famous faces, and *Spring*, Gandini Juggling's jubilant union with Alexander Whitley.

Plus, the Southbank Centre tackles climate change via Belgium's Focus/Chaliwaté, while Thomas Monckton and Circo Aereo reveal all in *The Artist*.

Until February 3
www.mimelondon.com

DANCE ASPHODEL MEADOWS/THE TWO PIGEONS

This Royal Ballet mixed bill pairs work by Founder Choreographer Frederick Ashton with its current Artist in Residence Liam Scarlett, creating a lush, seamless programme.

Ashton's 1961 work features a young love story briefly threatened by flirtation in bohemian Paris – the trajectory of the relationship echoed onstage by a pair of real live pigeons. It's set to Messenger's gorgeous score.

Scarlett's 2010 ballet also features a French composer – in this case, Poulenc's piano concerto – and is inspired by the underworld in Greek mythology that hosted the spirits of the departed.

With its fluid pas de deux and entrancing lyricism, Scarlett's work shows how Ashton's great tradition lives on at the Royal Ballet.



Picture: Bill Cooper/ROH

Until February 13
 Royal Opera House,
 Covent Garden WC2E
 Tickets from £3
www.roh.org

OPERA LA BOHÈME



Picture: Thomas Bowles/ENO

Jonathan Miller's beloved production of Puccini's enduring work, set in 1930s Paris, returns to the Coliseum to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Miller's English National Opera debut.

Award-winning Welsh soprano Natalya Romaniv marks her first ENO appearance as Mimi, leading a cast of rising operatic stars – including lyric tenor Jonathan Tetelman as Rodolfo, and baritone Nicholas Lester as Marcello.

Nadine Benjamin returns for her second season engagement as Musetta, following *Porgy and Bess*,

as does David Soar, after *Salome*, singing Colline, while Harewood artists Bozidar Smiljanic and Matthew Durkan share the role of Schaunard.

Under the baton of British conductor Alexander Joel, this promises to be a real musical treat.

Until February 22
 London Coliseum,
 Covent Garden WC2N
 Tickets from £12
www.eno.org

6 OF THE BEST ROMANTIC CINEMAS

Perfect for date night, or a special Valentine's outing...



Electric Cinema

Soho House transformed this Portobello Road staple – it's been there since 1911 – into a red-velvet cocoon, featuring double beds as well as comfy armchairs, plus superior snacking options.
www.electrccinema.co.uk

BFI Southbank

The programme is international art house-savvy, plus the BFI has a movie and meal deal, South Bank views, themed cocktails, and an intimate Drawing Room bar behind a secret bookcase door.
www.bfi.org.uk



Screen on the Green

Islington's long-standing local is delightfully cosy (literally just one screen), and with two-person sofas and table service direct to your seats, it's definitely date ready. Bonus: directors often attend for Q&As.
www.everymancinema.com/screen-on-the-green

The Prince Charles

Tucked away behind Leicester Square, this hip independent cinema hosts everything from cult classics and movie marathons to pyjama parties – plus you're close to Soho's bars and eateries.
www.princecharlescinema.com



Curzon Mayfair

Go upmarket in this chic historic venue. The smaller screen is a pleasingly snug 83-seater, while, if you're really looking to impress, the larger one still boasts its two original Royal Boxes.
www.curzoncinemas.com/mayfair

Rio Cinema

Housed in a Grade II-listed Art Deco building, Dalston's Rio offers everything from cool indie releases to modern misses, Q&As and theme nights. And don't miss the local East London fare in the café/bar.
www.riocinema.org.uk

