

MAY 2012

Festival season gets underway with the Camden Crawl, the Barbican beckons Bauhaus, and the Olympic countdown continues with test events and Orbit opening.



Outdoor theatre in Regent's Park



LONDON LANDMARKS

ARCELOR MITTAL: ORBIT

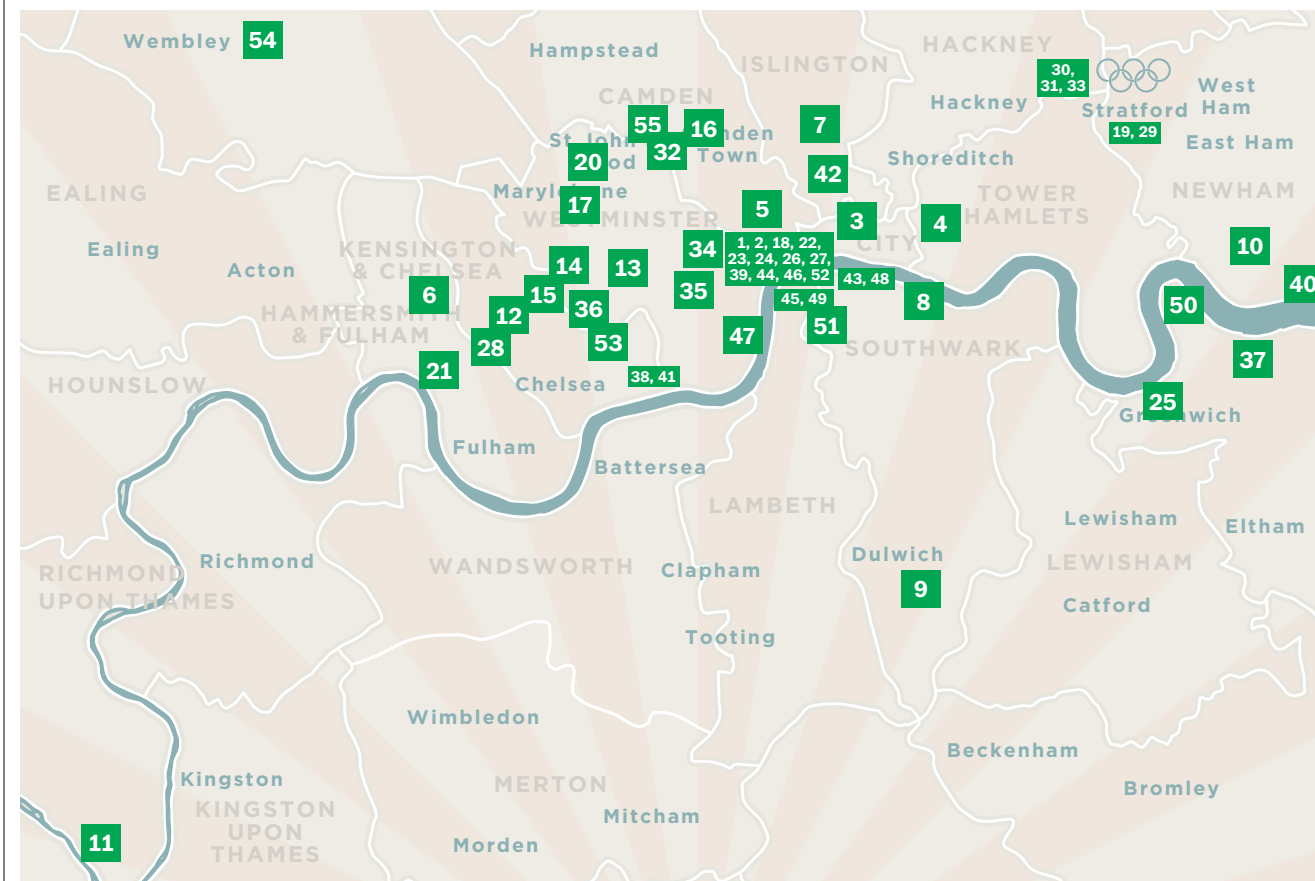
The London 2012 Olympic Park's "something extra"

East London's answer to the Eiffel Tower is the tallest sculpture in the UK and stands 22 metres higher than New York's Statue of Liberty. Designed by the renowned sculptor Anish Kapoor and set for completion this May **PAGE 54**, the 115-metre-tall red steel observational tower certainly has its detractors (The Times dismissed it as a vanity project of Boris Johnson's) but the big, bold, curious and colourful structure will be a lasting legacy to London and an iconic addition to the skyline. It's daring, exciting and striking – and the views from the top will be staggering. The Arcelor Mittal Orbit will open to the public at the start of The Games this July.

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LONDON EVENTS

WHAT'S ON WHERE IN MAY



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May

Ballet, burlesque, Bauhaus and ball gowns as Picasso and da Vinci come to town

During May The ArcelorMittal Orbit

May 2012
Olympic Park, London E20 2ST

A stone's throw from the new Olympic Stadium, the ArcelorMittal Orbit is a stunning new sculpture designed by the celebrated artist Anish Kapoor. Turner Prize winning Anish Kapoor is no stranger to large installations - his trumpet-like Marsyas filled the Tate's Turbine Hall in 2002 - and he's well known for his bold use of colour. His 115-metre Orbit will be the tallest sculpture in the UK and will consist of a looping lattice of tubular steel, designed to incorporate the five Olympic rings. Standing at 22 metres taller than New York's Statue of Liberty, the sculpture will offer unrivalled views of the park and London's incredible skyline. It is hoped that the sculpture will ensure the Olympic Park remains a popular tourist destination, long after the games have finished. Just over £19 million has been poured into the project, with £16 million being provided by ArcelorMittal. It will be completed in May and opened at the start of The Games.

From 1st Christian Louboutin

1st May - 9th July 2012
Design Museum, London SE1 2YD

For anyone who follows fashion, French shoe designer Christian Louboutin is the height of sophistication. His famous red soled shoes, on display at the Design Museum, are so beautifully crafted they could be said to stretch the boundary between fashion and artistry, engineering and sculpture. This exhibition celebrates Louboutin's career to date - it's been twenty years since he opened his first shop in Paris - and reveals the theatricality of his shoe design from skyscraping stilettos to

lace-up boots. Material from Christian Louboutin's personal archive reveals how he designs his shoes, the origins of the distinctive red sole - a Louboutin trademark - as well as the latest collections including handbags and a range for men. Given his long list of celebrity fans - Lady GaGa, Victoria Beckham, Sarah Jessica Parker and Madonna among them - this is a chance for the rest of us to see what's inside their closets.

2nd George Michael - Symphonica: The Orchestral Tour

Wednesday 2nd May 2012
Royal Albert Hall, Kensington,
London SW7 2AP

The British public's fascination for George Michael never ceases, and as he nears the anniversary of thirty successful years in the music business he appears for one night of musical celebration at the Royal Albert Hall. His turbulent personal life and his recent battle with illness were well documented in the press and this date in May marks his welcome return to the stage. He is set to perform at the Royal Albert Hall with a collection of some of his favourite songs from a long and outstanding career. The much-loved pop figure has evolved his style through the years and has sold over 100 million albums worldwide. Expect classics like 'Careless Whisper'



One of Christian Louboutin's famous red soled shoes



Da Vinci's studies of the human body go under the spotlight

From 4th Leonardo da Vinci: Anatomist

4th May - 7th October 2012
The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace,
London SW1A 1AA

FOLLOWING ON FROM THE HUGE POPULARITY of the recent National Gallery blockbuster show (Leonardo Da Vinci: Painter At The Court Of Milan), this exhibition at the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace offers visitors another chance to see drawings by the great Renaissance artist and inventor. Leonardo spent over twenty-five years investigating the workings of the human body and the drawings shown here represent his ground-breaking research. On top of ink studies of a skull and heart, there are fascinating annotated studies of the foetus in the womb - part of his prolonged investigation into reproduction - as well as studies of the muscles of the shoulder and arm, and the bones of the foot. This special exhibition is the largest ever exhibition of Leonardo da Vinci's studies of the human body, and one of several events held to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

and 'Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go' to get the crowd on their feet. This will be the first time fans get the chance to see the global icon since his last tour ended back in 2008.

2nd - 6th London Olympic Test Event: Hockey

2nd - 6th May 2012
The Hockey Centre, London
Olympic Park, London E20 2ST

One of the fastest team sports at the Olympics, the Hockey events will certainly provide rich entertainment come the summer. But if you aren't one of the lucky few to secure tickets, the test event at the newly built Hockey Centre in the Olympic Park is the next best thing. This is no simple practice occasion, however: the London International Hockey Tournament will take place over the four days, giving the world's best players the chance to gain valuable practice before the summer's main event.

From 3rd Royal Society of Portrait Painters Exhibition

3rd - 18th May 2012
Mall Galleries, Victoria,
London SW1Y 5BD
The country's leading portrait

exhibition, the Royal Society of Portrait Painters Exhibition displays painted and drawn portrait submissions by both national and international artists, including high profile commissions and works by artists never before seen. With more than 200 pieces on display, it forms an ideal place for artists to be selected for commissions. In addition to this, portraits of the Queen will be displayed in order to commemorate her Diamond Jubilee. Awards and prizes will be given, including the Prince of Wales's Award for Portrait Drawing, the Changing Faces Commission Prize and the Society's Gold Medal for the most distinguished painting.

From 3rd Picasso Prints: The Vollard Suite

3rd May - 2nd September 2012
British Museum, Bloomsbury,
London WC1B 3DG

The British Museum has recently been fortunate enough to acquire the complete Vollard Suite - a set of 100 etchings produced by Picasso between 1930 and 1937. With Picasso arguably being the 20th century's most important artist, the generosity of the Hamish Parker Charitable Trust has put the British Museum in a unique position, offering the ability to display the

pieces alongside classical sculptures that Picasso was inspired by. This will be the only complete Vollard Suite held by a public museum in the UK and it will join only a handful of museums in the world which hold a complete set. It will therefore be the first time a complete Vollard Suite has been shown in Britain in the past 50 years. The etchings represent a number of themes including Picasso's fascination with the Minotaur. Further influences seen in the artist's paintings include Rembrandt etchings and Goya prints.

3rd - 6th London Paralympic Test Event: Wheelchair Tennis

3rd - 6th May 2012
Eton Manor, London Olympic
Park, London E20 2ST

Wheelchair Tennis has notable differences from regular Tennis in that the ball is allowed to bounce twice, with only the first bounce having to land within the court boundaries. Since its inception in the 1970s, wheelchair tennis has grown in popularity - there are now over 170 tournaments on the ITF Wheelchair Tennis Tour. London crowds will have two chances to see some action this summer, with the Paralympic event

in September and the test event in May, both at Eton Manor (the only new permanent Paralympic venue) in the Olympic Park.

3rd - 6th London Olympic Test Event: Water Polo

3rd - 6th May 2012
Aquatics Centre, London
Olympic Park, London E20 2ST

The London Water Polo International will double as the test event for the Olympic Water Polo competition and will take place in the Aquatics Centre in the Olympic Park. A women's only event, consisting of Great Britain and three other international teams, the event will run over four days in May and will give London audiences the chance to witness the very best in thrilling, high-octane sport. If you've never seen live water polo before, you're in for a treat - think of it as an aquatic version of rugby.

3rd - 6th London Paralympic Test Event: Paralympic Archery

3rd - 6th May 2012
The Royal Artillery Barracks,
Woolwich, London SE18 5DP

International Paralympic archers trial standing and wheelchair events for individuals and teams in this four-day Olympic test event at the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich. The event is part of the London Prepares series, which runs high-profile tests on all London 2012 venues and for all events ahead of this summer's Olympic bonanza. The historic Barracks hosts the Olympic shooting competition as well as the Paralympic shooting and archery events - and for those who have not managed to snap up London 2012 tickets, this is the next best thing.

3rd - 19th Three Kingdoms

3rd - 19th May 2012
Lyric Hammersmith, London
W6 0QL

Written by Simon Stephens, Three Kingdoms is a dark new thriller that delves into the sinister topics of human trafficking and the vice trade. The production begins with the discovery



The new temporary Olympic Shooting venue near the Royal Artillery Barracks in Woolwich

of an Estonian woman's severed head in a Hammersmith river. Two British detectives set off on a journey to track her origins and explain the reason for her death – facing problems with international borders and language barriers it becomes a nightmare journey that will affect one of them forever. Set across England, Germany and Estonia, Three Kingdoms is performed in all three languages and tells the stories of traf-ficked women and the gangs and police forces across Europe who attempt to monitor the business.

From 3rd Bauhaus: Art as Life

3rd May - 12th August 2012
Barbican Gallery, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS
This year the Barbican will be showcasing the biggest Bauhaus exhibition in the UK for over 40 years. The exhibition's name aptly describes the intention of what the world famous art school represented - the notion of creating an everyday relationship between art and life. The school diminished the traditional teaching method of student and teacher and instead encouraged the concept of a community of artists working together. This exhibition will feature an array of work including paintings, sculptures, photography, textiles and film from artists such as Walter Gropius, Anni Albers and Paul Klee, as well as lesser-known artists and Bauhaus students.

4th - 7th London Olympic Test Event: Athletics

4th - 7th May 2012
Olympic Stadium, London Olympic Park, London E20 2ST
The very best of UK student athletics comes to the Olympic Stadium in May as they take part in track and field competitions as part of the British University and Colleges Sport Championships. The athletics events at the Olympics will surely be one of the most high profile occasions throughout the Games so it's vital to ensure that facilities and conditions at the Olympic Stadium are perfect. With the incredibly high demand for tickets to the athletics events for the

Games, this is a perfect opportunity for those who missed out on London 2012 tickets.

4th - 6th Camden Crawl

4th - 6th May 2012
Throughout Camden, London NW1 7JE
Head up to North London as the trailblazing Camden Crawl returns once again this spring. The first proper musical festival of the year, the Crawl always delivers with a cutting-edge list of up-and-coming local bands and established stars, performing in just about every important venue in Camden over two nights of music-fuelled abandon. As this is an event primarily for bands on the way up, peppered with well-known guests (last year's acts included Tinchy Stryder, Blur guitarist Graham Coxon, Simian Mobile Disco and Mark Ronson), it's not always obvious who the stars of tomorrow will be - but the promoters have a consistent ability to spot

the artists who are just on the point of going stratospheric and this is a great way to see them up close and personal before they start playing the major venues. The line-up for the May bank holiday festival has yet to be announced but the programme includes daytime events including live music, comedy, quizzes, spoken word, interactive games and crafts. One ticket (available as a weekend pass or day ticket) is exchanged for a wristband at a main entrance point and allows unlimited access to all Crawl venues, outdoor arenas, after show parties and daytime activities.

4th - 13th Einstein on the Beach: An opera in Four Acts

4th - 13th May 2012
Barbican Theatre, Silk Street, London EC2Y 8DS
This ground-breaking opera marathon is gracing the stage once more. Boosting director

Robert Wilson and composer Philip Glass to international acclaim in 1976, Einstein on the Beach is an opera in Four Acts that spreads across an impressive five hours. The piece breaks the traditional conventions as instead of an orchestral arrangement Glass chose to compose the work for the synthesisers, woodwinds and voices of the Philip Glass Ensemble. The piece doesn't have a set narrative but works using powerful recurrent images combined with abstract dance sequences interconnected with short play intervals. The result is unlike anything you've seen before.

5th - 7th Hampton Court Foodie Festival

5th - 7th May 2012
Hampton Court Palace, Surrey KT8 9AU
Meet Michelin star chefs, see live demonstrations and sample food from London's top restaurants at the Foodie Festival, taking place at both Hampton Court Palace and London Battersea Park (17th-19th August)
PAGE 112. Cooking is made to look easy thanks to demos from top chefs and if the mere thought of all that makes you hungry then you can head to the food tents where you can sample signature dishes from well known restaurants. Around 25,000 people are expected to attend which just goes to show the popularity of London's restaurants.

5th FA Cup Final

Saturday 5th May 2012
Wembley Stadium, London HA9 0WS
The most famous cup competition in world football reaches its finale at Wembley Stadium as the two sides who have battled through to the FA Cup Final go all out to claim the last major trophy of the English season. Romantics will point to the fabled 'Magic of the Cup' in the hope that a surprise team makes a run to the final. Over the past decade, Wycombe Wanderers, Millwall, Barnsley and Cardiff have all come from nowhere to claim semi-final places, with some even making it all the way to Wembley.



The Barbican hosts the UK's biggest Bauhaus exhibition in 40 years



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However, the last 'underdog' to actually win a Wembley final was Everton in 1995, who saw off the all-conquering Manchester United. Last season's final saw big-spending Manchester City claim the first trophy of their new cash-fuelled reign as one of English football's superpowers. They saw off a rugged Stoke City, beating them 1-0 after a Yaya Touré goal with fifteen minutes remaining.

5th - 7th London Paralympic Test Event: Boccia

5th - 7th May 2012
Basketball Arena, London Olympic Park E20 3BB
What's boccia? Well, since you ask, let us explain: it's a sport unique to the Paralympic Games played by wheelchair athletes of either gender with cerebral palsy and related locomotor conditions. The aim is to throw leather balls towards a target ball, or jack, across a series of demanding 'ends', or sets, on a playing area measuring 12.5m by 6m. Note: this Paralympic Test Event does not take place at the ExCeL Centre, the venue that hosts the London 2012 Paralympic Boccia competition, but at the new Basketball Arena in the Olympic Park in East London instead.

5th - 7th Breakin' Convention

5th - 7th May 2012
Sadler's Wells, Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4TN
This three-day festival, curated by Jonzi D, burst onto the scene in 2004 and it hasn't looked back since, showcasing some of the best hip hop dance from far and wide as well as fresh home-grown talent. Breakin' Convention at Sadler's Wells is a frenzy of cutting-edge moves with one head-spinning act after another taking to the stage to wow audiences. Alongside world class performances the weekend is packed with live aerosol jams, workshop programmes, DJ demos and freestyle circles.

5th - 7th Canalway Cavalcade

5th - 7th May 2012
Little Venice, Paddington, London W2 1TH
Canalway Cavalcade is a distinctive waterway festival that takes place at the suitable location of Little Venice. Organised by Inland Waterways Association volunteers, there will be an array of boats, trade show stalls and boater gatherings making it a perfect festival for water lovers. As well as the boating activities there will also be Morris

dancing, competitions, food, kids' activities and of course a real ale bar, making it an enjoyable day out for families. Plus with the location being quaint Little Venice, this creates the perfect opportunity for a gentle stroll and an enjoyable view alongside your lunch.

5th - 13th Grand Designs Live

5th - 13th May 2012
ExCel Centre, London E16 1XL
The multi-award-winning Grand Designs Live show returns to ExCel Centre this spring. It's based on the hugely popular Channel 4 TV series in which the general public aim to build their dream homes. Presented by design guru Kevin McCloud, the show is the perfect place to come for ideas and inspiration for the home with over 500 exhibitors, top TV celebrities, shopping and fabulous show features. Whether you're building a conservatory, renovating a new home or just trying to sort out your hideous living room, there will be something for you at this ultimate exhibition for people passionate about home and garden design.

6th The Night of 1000 Voices

Sunday 6th May 2012
Royal Albert Hall, Kensington, London SW7 2AP
The Night of 1000 Voices will again be treating audiences to the sight and sounds of the huge Massed Choir from all over the British Isles, with Stephen Disley playing the grand organ of the Royal Albert Hall and the City of London Philharmonic accompanying. In order to embrace the year of the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee, the event will be celebrating the Best of British including some of the most requested songs from The Lion King, Jesus Christ Superstar and Les Misérables. The evening will once again be for the benefit of Leukaemia & Lymphoma Research.

6th Vaisakhi on the Square

Sunday 6th May 2012
Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DN

Every May sees Trafalgar Square transformed into a colourful celebration to welcome in the Sikh New Year. The Vaisakhi Festival is truly a sight to behold with traditional and modern Asian music and dancing and an array of exotic culinary delights on offer. The official date for Vaisakhi is 13th April, but the Vaisakhi festival in Trafalgar Square is held on Sunday 6th May in 2012. Commemorating 300 years of the consecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru, in London Vaisakhi includes performances of music such as Shabad Kirtin (religious hymns), as well as modern dance music and DJs.

6th Baishakhi Mela

6th May 2012 (Provisional date)
Weavers Fields, Allen Gardens & Brick Lane, London E1 6PU
East meets West in May as the streets of 'Banglatown' Brick Lane fill with the sounds of celebration as crowds gather to ring in the Bengali New Year, Baishakhi Mela. Famous for its curry houses, Brick Lane is the obvious choice of venue to celebrate Baishakhi Mela and the event regularly attracts up to 120,000 visitors. Details of the 2012 event have yet to be announced but the festivities usually take place in Weavers Fields, Allen Gardens and Brick Lane with a colourful procession of musicians, dancers and local children to kick things off.

7th - 13th World Burlesque Games

7th - 13th May 2012
Various venues around London
Prudes, avert your eyes - for the World Burlesque Games (London Burlesque Festival) returns for the sixth year at Soho's Madame JoJo's and a number of other venues across the capital. Brought to you by the infamous King of Burlesque, Chaz Royal, the man behind the hilariously named 'Pavabotti - The Naked Tenor', this year's event is as big and glamorous as ever, with a whole seven nights of raucous exotic entertainment showcasing the very best in British burlesque and beyond. If you crave suspenders, stockings, whips,

lace, red lips, lascivious ladies, pert posteriors and a bit of a slap 'n' tickle then this shindig is for you, saucy.

From 8th London Wonderground

8th May - 29th September 2012

Southbank Centre, London SE1 8XX

Coinciding with the E4 Udderbelly festival, the Southbank Centre will also see a spectacular showcase of events at London Wonderground. This brand new amusement ground will engulf the Southbank in a world of circuses, sideshows and unusual surprises. The focal point of the park will be an enormous Spiegeltent that boasts an impressive programme of international cabaret, music and circus. The headlining production will be Australian circus hit, Cantina, specialising in sensational vaudeville and circus. It will feature Australia's top artists from La Clique, Circa, Tom Tom Crew and Circus Oz. Further events included in this five month spectacular will be: Alternative Eurovision, East End Cabaret and British comedy trio Fascinating Aida.

From 8th Babel

8th - 20th May 2012



Madame Butterfly is revived by the ENO at the London Coliseum

Caledonian Park, Islington, London N7 9PW

Two years in the making, Wild-Works and Battersea Arts Centre are coming together to present Babel. The event is part of World Stages London, a series of shows that will be bringing together leading London theatres (Lyric Hamersmith, Royal Court Theatre and the Young Vic among them) in a unique collaboration. With only twelve performances but a cast of 500 professional and community performers, Babel is set to be a spectacular outdoor show. The performance tells the story of two tribes coming together to create a new city, a haven for strangers and a place to become the best of what you can be.

From 8th Madam Butterfly

8th May - 2nd June 2012

English National Opera, London Coliseum, London WC2N 4ES

The ENO is reviving this masterpiece at the London Coliseum as a tribute to Oscar-winning film director Anthony Minghella. He turned his creative genius to the operatic stage in 2005 and the result was this stunning, soaring version of Madam Butterfly. Minghella worked on the production alongside his wife, choreographer Carolyn Choa, making

her the perfect person to direct this revival. Puccini's tale of a geisha who gives up everything for dashing American Lieutenant Pinkerton, only to be abandoned and then cruelly betrayed, is rich material. Japanese lanterns bring the exotic setting into dramatic focus and there's some stunning imagery including a ballet sequence surrounded by showers of cherry blossom. Choa's choreography also displays the formality and power of Far Eastern theatre traditions while Han Feng's extravagant costumes bathe the stage in a riot of seductive colour. A huge angled mirror above the stage lets audiences glimpse an alternative and sometimes hidden world. This promises to be a passionate revival of a simply beautiful production.

8th

London Olympic Test Event: Paralympic Athletics

Tuesday 8th May 2012

Olympic Stadium, London Olympic Park, London E20 2ST

Sports lovers will be treated to a full day of Paralympic Athletics ahead of London 2012 with the London Disability Grand Prix meet, the final test event ahead of the Summer Games. With the Olympic Opening Ceremony just two months away, this will be the last chance for spectators to experience the Olympic Stadium in a competitive scenario before the final tweaks are made ahead of the Summer Games.

From 8th

The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe

8th May - 9th September 2012

Kensington Gardens, Princes Square, London W2 3HJ

The threesixty theatre company return to Kensington Gardens with The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe, directed by Rupert Goold and Michael Fentiman. This re-telling of the popular C.S. Lewis story features puppetry and surround video as well as live performance. The story follows four siblings through the wardrobe on a magical

adventure in a tale that has inspired children for over 60 years. In the theatre version, "Aslan is kind of big, kind of cool, and kind of terrifying when he gets his stalk on," according to his puppeteer creator Max Humphries. Children of all ages will be delighted to see their feline hero, the true king of Narnia animated on the stage.

10th - 12th

Ballet Preljocaj: Snow White

10th - 12th May 2012

Sadler's Wells, Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj created this version of Snow White, a contemporary and romantic ballet, in 2008 and four years on he returns to Sadler's Wells with his award-winning adaptation of the Brothers Grimm fairytale. Set to a symphony by Gustav Mahler with lavish costumes by Jean Paul Gaultier and a dark and dramatic set designed by Thierry Leproust, the show premiered in September 2008 at the Biennale de la danse of Lyon. Performed by Angelin's Preljocaj company of 25 dancers, this contemporary ballet tells the classic story of the wicked queen (Celine Galli), who sets out to destroy her rival in a fairytale world of magic, drama and romance.

10th - 13th

The Diamond Jubilee Pageant at Windsor Castle

10th - 13th May 2012

Windsor Castle, Windsor SL4 1NJ

More than 500 horses will put on a spectacular equestrian show for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee at a special pageant at Windsor Castle, the first major event of the 2012 celebrations marking the Queen's sixtieth anniversary. The horses will be joined by 800 human performers, including riders, dancers and musicians for The World Comes to Windsor show on 10th, 11th and 13th May, with the Queen attending on the final night. The seven acts represent different areas of the globe: Great Britain, Europe, The Americas, Australasia, Asia,

the Middle East and Africa. The show opens and closes in Great Britain and demonstrates the Queen's connection with horses, from her racing interests to their ceremonial significance. The colourful display includes performances by the Kremlin Mounted Cossacks, the New Zealand Defence Force Band and Maoris, and representatives of the Masai, Samburu, Luo, Kamba and Kikuyo Tribes of Africa - all reflecting the Queen's State and Commonwealth interests. In addition, a series of educational events exploring the different cultures represented in the Pageant will take place in the 'Cultural Pavilion' in the showground during the day. Tickets to the Pageant also allow access to The Jubilee Royal Windsor Horse Show which takes place in the same venue during the day.

11th

Channel 4 Comedy Gala

Friday 11th May 2012

The O2 Arena, Greenwich, London SE10 0DX

Returning for its third year, the Channel 4 Comedy Gala will once again be lighting up the stage at the O2 Arena. In aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital, a star studded comedy cast will be coming together for the UK's biggest stand-up show. The line-up sees Lee Evans, Michael McIntyre, Jonathan Ross, Micky Flanagan, Sean Lock, Kevin Bridges, Jo Brand, Jack Whitehall, Jack Dee, Jon Richardson, Seann Walsh, Lee Nelson, Josh Widdicombe and Paul Chowdhry all take to the stage. With one great comedian rolling in after another, it will be a fight to gain the biggest stomach aching laugh of the night.

12th

The MoonWalk London

Saturday 12th May 2012

Hyde Park, London W2 2UH

The world's only Power Walking Marathon returns for its 15th birthday. The MoonWalk attracts 15,000 participants and raises money for Walk the Walk, a breast cancer charity that makes grants available to support medical research but one that also funds emotional



Celine Galli's wicked witch in Ballet Preljocaj's Snow White

and physical care to those who have cancer. This year's theme is 'Rockin' around the World, so expect the walkers to stride out in some blue suede shoes and bouffant hair. Wearing a colourfully decorated bra has become de rigueur on the walk, so look out for leather and studs in 2012.

13th

Covent Garden May Fayre and Puppet Festival

Sunday 13th May 2012

Covent Garden, London WC2E 9ED

It may be his 350th birthday but Mr Punch is showing no signs of slowing down. This annual Covent Garden May Fayre and Puppet Festival celebrates the red nosed stick-wielding puppet, bringing together dozens of puppeteers in a colourful, highly entertaining afternoon. The Covent Garden location is appropriately close to the spot where Samuel Pepys first sighted Mr Punch on 9th May 1662 and recorded the fact in his diary - which is why the birthday celebrations fall on or near to 9th May. Puppeteers from all over the country are accompanied by folk music, dancers, clowns and jugglers. An integral part of British heritage, the puppet with attitude is a wonderful, anarchic

figure and this is a top traditional family day out.

15th - 19th

Rambert Dance Company: What Wild Ecstasy

15th - 19th May 2012

Sadler's Wells, Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

To commemorate Rambert's 85th anniversary year, the dance company's artistic director Mark Baldwin has created What Wild Ecstasy, a modern-day take on Nijinsky's 100-year-old L'après-midi d'un faune. London based composer Gavin Higgins has taken Debussy's harmonic palette as a starting point to create a piece of music, part of the new choreography for Rambert and together will form a new ballet to mark the centenary of the iconic L'après-midi d'un faune.

16th - 19th

Spirit of Summer Fair

16th - 19th May 2012

Olympia, Hammersmith Road, London W14 8UX

Hosted by House and Garden magazine, the Spirit of Summer Fair at Olympia is the summer season version of their hugely popular annual Spirit of

Christmas Fair. After making a successful first appearance in 2009 it's back in 2012 with lots of ideas for enjoying the summertime in style. There are over 200 stalls to browse around so you can get your summer shopping done, from improvements to your home to stocking up on beachwear, all under one roof. Most of the exhibitors offer special finds and unique goods you won't get in high street shops.

From 17th The Queen: Art and Image

17th May - 21st October 2012

National Portrait Gallery, London WC2H 0HE

There are many exhibitions marking the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, but of these the National Portrait Gallery is staging the most daring, bringing together sixty "remarkable and resonant" images of Elizabeth II including Chris Levine's 2004 photograph, 'Lightness of Being', a highly unusual portrait of the Queen with her eyes closed. The Queen: Art and Image shows painted portraits, official photographs and unofficial depictions of Her Majesty including works by well known artists Gilbert and George, Andy Warhol and Gerhard Richter. Justin Mortimer, commissioned to create an official portrait of the Queen in 1998, likened the task to "having to redesign the Coca-Cola logo - she's so recognised."

17th - 21st

1st Investec Test: England v West Indies

17th - 21st May 2012

Lord's Cricket Ground, London NW8 8QN

England kick off their international summer with a Test match against the West Indies at Lord's as they aim to build on their status as the number one side in the world. England play just six Test matches at home this year - three against the West Indies and three against the touring South Africans. Lord's has long been seen as the 'home of cricket' and the game's spiritual headquarters, and watching a match here is as quintessentially English as having afternoon tea - and the late afternoon tea break is a wonderful cricketing tradition.

From 18th Regent's Park Open Air Theatre Summer Season

18th May - 5th September 2012

Open Air Theatre, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NU

This is the 80th season for The Regent's Park Open Air Theatre, and seeing a play here has become an essential part of spending summer in London. With 2012 being a special year when the world will be watching London, the theatre will be stepping away from their usual programme. Instead, they will be presenting two major productions playing in repertory: the Tony Award-winning Ragtime (from 18th May); and Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream which opens on 2nd June. Ragtime is a contemporary musical based on the novel by EL Doctorow while A Midsummer Night's Dream is an Open Air Theatre favourite, well suited to the magical fairy light setting. Both will share a creative team under the guidance of the Open Air Theatre's artistic director Timothy Sheader and Liam Steel whose 2010 staging here of Sondheim's Into the Woods earned them a prestigious Olivier award for Best Musical Revival. We can expect two strong productions from this pairing who have a proven track record and whose staging of the Lord of the Flies last year was described as "nothing less than a triumph" by The Daily Telegraph. Opt for 'Olympic tickets' and you pay £20.12 for all shows between 25th July and 12th August if bought before the end of April 2012.

18th - 20th Words in the Park

18th - 20th May 2012

Holland Park Theatre, Holland Park, London W8 6LU

A literary goldmine, Words in the Park will feature three days' worth of events with high profile names and original thinkers, all staged within the beautiful grounds of Holland Park. With around five events each day including book signings, talks, debates and readings from some of the biggest names in modern literature, this festival is a must-do for all literature aficionados

and book fans. Taking place within the theatre created for the Opera Holland Park season, you can enjoy the very best of the festival in picturesque surroundings and all just a stone's throw away from central London.

18th - 20th Swan Lake on Ice

18th - 20th May 2012

Royal Albert Hall, Kensington, London SW7 2AP

The dark and romantic 1895 Tchaikovsky ballet will be revived in London this May as Imperial Ice Stars take their interpretation to the Royal Albert Hall for Swan Lake on Ice. The fairytale nature of this most famous of ballets never goes out of fashion as the age-old question of whether love will prevail - throw in a prince in his castle and a spell by an evil magician - is enchantingly played out to Tchaikovsky's soaring score. The leads are performed with consummate grace by some of the world's most accomplished principal skaters to a backdrop of lavish sets.

18th - 20th Museums at Night

18th - 20th May 2012

Various venues in London

This annual campaign treats visitors to after-hours fun in some of London's finest museums, galleries and heritage sights. Expect twilight tours and midnight mystery in some of the most fascinating and historic locations the capital has to offer. The Museums at Night weekend opens up our landmark museums for a weekend of special, exclusive viewings and events. If you think the idea of spending the night in a dusty old museum sounds a bit dull then think again: Museums at Night is a great opportunity to enjoy London's culture and heritage in a more sociable, convivial atmosphere.

From 19th Edward Burtynsky: OIL

19th May - 1st July 2012

Photographers' Gallery, Ramiel Street, London W1F 7LW

Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky's 10-year study of the manufacture, distribution and use of oil is one of two exhibitions to mark the re-opening of the Photographer's Gallery

which has been closed since autumn 2010 while undergoing a £8.9m redevelopment. In this exhibition, succinctly titled 'OIL', 30 large-scale images chronicle the effect that 'black gold' has on humans, including production and distribution methods, and ultimately the end of oil. Some images are taken from an aerial perspective, showing the ravaged landscape of an oil field, and spaghetti junction style roads ribboning across the landscape, strangely beautiful but ultimately a disturbing portrayal of man's addiction to oil.

From 19th Ballgowns: Sixty Years of British Glamour

19th May 2012 - 6th January 2013

Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), Cromwell Road, London SW7 2RL

The fashion gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum has been revamped and will be reopening with the exhibition Ballgowns: Sixty Years of British Glamour. Events such as the recent Royal Wedding prove how a nation can become fixated on one item: a dress. This event will be showcasing and celebrating some famous ballgowns worn by celebrities including Princess Diana, Kate Moss and Elizabeth Hurley over the past sixty years. With designers Stella McCartney,



The Lion, The Witch And The Wardrobe - Kensington Gardens

Alexander McQueen and Gareth Pugh all having their creations displayed, this will be both a revival of fashion history and the opportunity to see these fashion masterpieces up close.

19th - 20th Kapow! Comic Convention

19th - 20th May 2012

Business Design Centre, Islington, London N1 0QH

The success of the famous San Diego Comic Con has been transferred across the pond and comes to London in the shape of the Kapow! Comic Convention. After the sell-out success of the inaugural convention in 2011, sales for the 2012 instalment, at the Business Design Centre, are expected to be huge. A raft of the



Edward Burtynsky: Highway #1, Los Angeles, California, USA

biggest names in comic-books, film, TV and gaming will be in attendance and fans will have the chance to meet their heroes, witness advanced screenings and book readings and, of course, fill out their autograph books with a host of signatures.

21st - 27th Luxury Camping at ZSL London Zoo

21st - 27th May 2012

ZSL London Zoo, Regent's Park, London NW1 4RY

Spend the night at ZSL London Zoo and awake to the sound of the wildlife as you camp overnight in luxury conditions. Go behind the scenes and find out what happens at the famous London Zoo after hours as you enjoy a torch-lit tour, exclusive animal and conservation talks, food and drink and comfy beds. Wake up to the sound of the animals doing the same thing before enjoying a full English breakfast and a morning tour to see the animals as they rise. You can then spend the rest of the day enjoying the zoo or head home to start sharing your adventure. Available for just one week only in May - book your place quickly.

From 21st The Beloved

21st May - 9th June 2012

Bush Theatre, 7 Uxbridge Road, London W12 8LJ

Acclaimed Palestinian theatre company ShiberHur and the Young Vic arrive at the Bush Theatre with their emotive and tragic take on the story of Abraham and Isaac. ShiberHur - under the direction of Amir Nizar Zuabi - had great success with their previous productions of I Am Yusef and In the Penal Colony and are known for their poignant and sometimes unsettling performances. The Beloved picks up the tale as Abraham arrives home from a journey up the mountain with his son, where his wife notices a disturbing shift in the boy's mental state. This historic story has greatly influenced many aspects of art, literature and philosophy but is now reinterpreted at its most human level as part of London's World Stages festival.

From 21st The Suit

21st May - 16th June 2012

Young Vic, Waterloo, London SE1 8LZ

Set in hot and dry 1950s South Africa, The Suit follows a young husband who arrives home to find his wife in bed with another man. The lover flees, but in his haste he leaves behind a suit. The tale which unfolds sees the clothing become a crucial part of the husband's oddly thoughtful punishment. The original fable by Can Themba is now adapted into musical form under the direction of Peter Brook and Marie-Helene Estienne, whose company of international actors, singers and musicians reinterpret The Suit at The Young Vic as part of World Stages London.

From 21st Ballo della regina/La Sylphide

21st May - 15th June 2012

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DD

The operatic double bill of Ballo della regina/La Sylphide is set to wow London crowds in the summer as two technically brilliant productions come together to provide a feast of ballet and dance. George Balanchine's Ballo della regina, set to the music of Giuseppe Verdi's opera Don

Carlos, is an explosion of pure dance and, married with Johan Kobborg's atmospheric drama La Sylphide, it creates the ultimate ballet experience. La Sylphide is one of the world's oldest surviving romantic ballets.

22nd - 24th London International Wine Fair

22nd - 24th May 2012

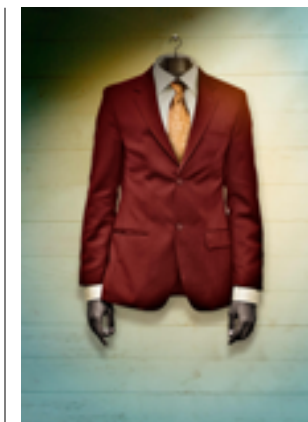
ExCel Centre, London E16 1XL

A unique trade-only event, the London International Wine Fair focuses heavily on the discovery of new wines and spirits, emerging countries and regions and new vintage releases. 20,000 wines from some 35 countries will be put on show, giving buyers and traders the opportunity to discover new wines and new market trends. As trends in the UK are often a strong indication as to what will happen in other international markets, the London International Wine Fair is a must visit for international buyers. It's also free so visitor numbers are expected to be high. Just leave your car at home, is the best advice we can give...

22nd - 26th RHS Chelsea Flower Show

22nd - 26th May 2012

Royal Hospital Chelsea, Kensington, London SW3 4SR



Can Themba's fable is adapted in The Suit at The Young Vic

Founded in 1913, the Chelsea Flower Show is an extraordinary event and famous all around the world. Eight hundred of the greatest exponents of imaginative garden design spend nearly a month creating a horticultural wonderland over an 11-acre site in Chelsea's Royal Hospital gardens. Most of London society, including the Queen, regards the Chelsea Flower Show as a highpoint of the London summer season, so if you get bored of the blooms you can have a great time celebrating. New for this year will be the Fresh Gardens and Trade stands where there will be the opportunity to see the latest in garden technology. Please note that the first two days are exclusive RHS members-only preview days.

From 23rd SUM

23rd May - 2nd June 2012

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DD

German composer Max Richter debuts a new chamber opera at the Royal Opera House, entitled SUM, based on a best-selling book and incorporating aspects of film, music and performance. Directed by Wayne McGregor and based on the novel 'SUM: Forty Tales from the Afterlives' by American neuroscientist David Eagleman, the opera has been described as an 'interactive audience experience' (no seat numbers are allocated) and is based on the afterlife. The Linbury Studio will play host to the world premiere of this intriguing opera concept.



Museums at Night: After-hours fun at top London locations

23rd - 24th Elvis Costello

23rd - 24th May 2012

Royal Albert Hall, South Kensington, London SW7 2AP

Legendary singer-songwriter Elvis Costello (his real name is the slightly less punk Declan Patrick MacManus) is back on stage at the ripe old age of 57 as he returns to the Royal Albert Hall with his Revolver tour. This is a show like few others - after an overture of five rock and roll tunes announces Costello and his band, the Imposters, onto the stage, members of the audience are invited to spin a gigantic contraption in order to select the next song. And those fans stepping up to the plate will surely be hoping they are lucky enough to select such classic hits as Oliver's Army, Shipbuilding and Watching The Detectives. Costello and the band will also be performing selected tunes from other iconic artists including Bob Dylan, Johnny Cash and The Rolling Stones. The Los Angeles Times even felt moved enough to describe the show as "the kind of uniquely invigorating experience that warrants a buzzword all of its own."

From 24th Wah! Wah! Girls

24th May - 23rd June 2012

Sadler's Wells, Rosebury Avenue, London EC1R 4TN

Set against the energetic background of the East End, Wah! Wah! Girls invites Bollywood to the streets of London. Inspired by the world of Mujra dancers - who for generations have entertained the rich and powerful by entrancing them with dance and song - Wah! Wah! Girls tells an endearing story of fighting against the odds for love. The determined girls uncover deep secrets and go on to create dreams they never believed could come true. Choreographed by Bollywood expert Javed Sanadi and leading Kathal choreographer Gauri Sharma Tripathi, audiences can expect mesmerising dance sequences which embrace the modern British-Asian community.

From 25th Caligula

25th May - 14th June 2012

London Coliseum - ENO, London WC2N 4ES

Young Australian director Benedict Andrews brings his production of Albert Camus' Caligula to London. Composed by Detlev Glanert, this opera depicts the Roman emperor Caligula as he embarks upon a tale of sexual immorality and brutal cruelty. After the death of his adored sister, the emperor makes a



Elvis Costello fires his Revolver at the Royal Albert Hall

realisation about the absurdity of life and sets off on his orgy of self-destruction. Andrews' depiction of the opera is set in a football stadium, as the dictator plays out his destructive political game. Running at the London Coliseum on six nights this spring/summer, be sure not to miss out on this powerful production.

26th British Gas Great London Swim

Saturday 26th May 2012

Royal Victoria Dock, Newham, London E16 1RH

If you've ever fancied the

challenge of swimming in the Thames then this is your chance. The British Gas Great London Swim is available to all, no matter how adept you are at front crawl. The challenge is to swim one mile as fast as you can and there are organised swims taking place throughout the UK; in London, the Royal Victoria Dock - home to the London Triathlon - is the centre of activity. If you've already been making use of London's lakes and lidos, this is a great way to do more outdoor swimming. Get your wetsuit out and get involved. Just try not to swallow any of the water - ask David Walliams, it's not nice...

From 31st Salome

31st May - 16th June 2012

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London WC2E 9DD

Richard Strauss' classic Salome is revived at the Royal Opera House with conduction from Andris Nelsons and Angela Denoke in the title role. This one act opera is based on Oscar Wilde's play of the same name and is loosely formed around the biblical story of Salome and her mother Herodias. The music is dark and disturbing, mirroring the passions and the motives of the characters - look out for the wild and seductive Dance of the Seven Veils. The lead soprano role of Salome is one of opera's most challenging parts as the singer must conquer the rigorous vocal demands as well as displaying the varying ranges of Salome's character.



Hardy swimmers brave the Thames in the Great London Swim



The largest multi-arts venue in Europe, the Barbican Centre celebrates its 30th anniversary this year and is one of London's main arts hubs

LONDON ENTERTAINMENT

MAJOR ENTERTAINMENT CENTRES

London has more arts and culture hubs than any other capital city. *By Felix Lowe*

IT'S NO SURPRISE LONDON IS OFTEN CALLED THE CULTURAL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD. Given the peerless array of historic and iconic entertainment centres across the city it's a hard task singling out the very best.

Imagine London as a chess board whose pieces are those major venues that give London its cultural trailblazing reputation. There are all manner of pawns dotted around the city, excellent venues in their own right, but often serving just one sole purpose and moving in one direction. What we're interested in outlining here are the Kings, Queens, Bishops, Rooks and Knights of London's entertainment scene - establishments that move in a variety of ways and deliver both consistently and commercially.

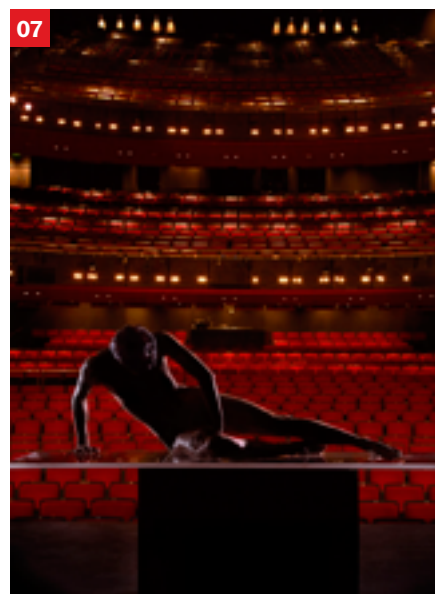
Take the Royal Albert Hall [10](#), for instance. Well worthy of its regal status, the eye-catching Grade I-listed giant oval amphitheatre presides over Kensington Gardens and is one of London's most versatile venues. Classical music, rock concerts, jazz, opera, dance, theatre, circus acts, banquets, balls, awards ceremonies and even sporting events such as Masters' tennis [PAGE 160](#) all take place in the RAH, which is best-known for the world-famous Proms series [PAGE 98](#) that features more than 100 classical

concerts over two months every summer.

While it is a destination in its own right, one thing the RAH is not - and perhaps thankfully - is entirely avant garde and de nos jours. For pushing the boundaries, while maintaining a constant high level of both classic and traditional events, Londoners have two cultural heavyweights in the Southbank and Barbican centres.

Perched beside the Thames near Waterloo Station, the Southbank Centre [03 11](#) may not display the same architectural elegance at the Royal Albert Hall (the 60s 'brutalist' concrete structure is not to everyone's taste) but it sure makes up for it with a diverse programme of events that covers virtually every art form.

The Royal Festival Hall [03 11](#) is the Centre's main stage, offering classical and orchestral music, world music events and even electronic outings; the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Purcell Room host regular recitals, dance performances and choral concerts; the Hayward Gallery consistently exhibits important and influential artists and collections, while the British Film Institute - which sponsors the annual London Film Festival [PAGE 139](#) - is a mecca for



2. ENO COLISEUM © KARLA GOWLETT 3. ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL © RICHARD BRYANT ARCAD 4. THE HALL, BARBICAN, COURTESY BARBICAN CENTRE 5. ROYAL OPERA HOUSE, COURTESY OF ROH 6. KING'S PLACE, COURTESY KING'S WELLS 7. CLOD ANATOMY, SADLER'S WELLS, COURTESY SADLER'S WELLS

8. 02, COURTESY AEG WORLDWIDE © JOHN TRAMPER 10. ROYAL ALBERT HALL © MARCUS GINNS 11. ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL, COURTESY SOUTHBANK CENTRE

movie buffs of all genres and ages.

Often seen as the Southbank's principal rival, the Barbican **01 04** has been described by the Queen (no less) as "one of the wonders of the modern world". Granted, the multi-faceted performance and arts venue may not be London's prettiest building but its archaic futurist style is quite intriguing. Situated in an area badly bombed during World War II and open 363 days a year, it offers the most diverse programme of any London venue.

Barbican Hall is home to the London Symphony Orchestra, while the Barbican Theatre, previously home to the Royal Shakespeare Company, welcomes top international productions. There's a second theatre called The Pit, three cinema screens, the Barbican Art Gallery, the new-commission Curve gallery, and a host of smaller exhibition spaces within its labyrinthine corridors.

London's biggest purpose-built concert hall since the Barbican makes up part of the new award-winning Kings Place complex at King's Cross **06**. While it still has a lot of ground to catch up on its older, more illustrious competitors, Kings Place is a growing hub for music, art, dialogue and food, and is fast gaining a reputation as one of the city's best new performance venues. Two orchestras – the London Sinfonietta and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment – are based here in the stunning wood-lined 420-seat auditorium, and there's also two art galleries and some appealing public spaces. The venue also

In the summer Hyde Park doubles up as London's biggest outdoor venue



12

boasts invaluable media contacts: it shares a building with the new offices of the arts-heavy Guardian newspaper.

Lambasting the ill-fated Millennium Dome was one of the things papers like the Guardian did best – and who would have thought that a project so reviled as this New Labour own-goal would go on to become one of London's most versatile venues? Attracting the biggest bands and singers on the globe, The O2 Arena in Greenwich **08** is now officially the world's busiest music arena. And it's not just music concerts taking centre-stage: The O2 this year will welcome huge productions such as the War of the Worlds **PAGE 161** and the Cirque du Soleil: Michael Jackson Immortal Tour **PAGE 136**.

The cavernous venue, which can sit up to 20,000 people per concert, also hosts some of the funniest comedians in the business as well as hosting numerous sporting events, including tennis (the annual ATP World Tour Finals **PAGE 147**), boxing, gymnastics, basketball and ice hockey. As the North Greenwich Arena, it is also one of the main venues for the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics **PAGE 110**.

Before the rise of The O2, London's biggest arena was way out at the complete opposite end of town. Built in 1934 and originally housing a swimming pool that was used during the 1948 Olympics, Wembley Arena is a large and versatile venue that still hosts big-name pop and rock concerts, some of the UK's best-known comedians, TV shows such as X Factor,

Dancing on Ice **PAGE 36** and Strictly Come Dancing, and an array of sporting events, from boxing to snooker. During London 2012, Wembley Arena will host the Olympic badminton and rhythmic gymnastics competitions.

Next door, the newly refurbished Wembley Stadium not only plays host to England's football matches, FA Cup semi-finals and finals **PAGE 56**, and playoff games; it's also the venue for the rugby league Challenge Cup final **PAGE 113**, the annual NFL International Series game **PAGE 138**, and a cluster of concerts for top music acts. Playing catch-up in this respect is Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, which is now beginning to welcome top acts such as Bruce Springsteen and Coldplay.

When it comes to classical music, opera, ballet and dance, London is teeming with specialist multi-purpose venues. The traditionalists have the ornate Grade II-listed London Coliseum in the West End **02**, home of the English National Opera, as well as the palatial Royal Opera House **05**, which rises above Covent Garden, and through several reconstructions (the latest in the 90s) has welcomed major stars of the classical music world since 1858.

A short bus or taxi ride away, Sadler's Wells in Clerkenwell **07** has a balanced mix of both contemporary and classic performances. It's the home of Matthew Bourne's groundbreaking ballet company, New Adventures, and is also universally accepted as London's go-to venue for dance.

Finally, a round-up of London's best multi-purpose venues wouldn't be complete without a nod to one of the capital's most accessible (and central) open playgrounds: Hyde Park **12**. More than just a vast green space free for all to roam, Hyde Park is one of London's primary outdoor music venues, hosting each summer the Wireless Festival **PAGE 96**, Hard Rock Calling **PAGE 98** and the popular Proms in the Park event **PAGE 98**.

Blur played here as part of their reunion in 2009, adding to a list of illustrious performers through the years that includes Pink Floyd, Queen, Luciano Pavarotti and Elvis Costello. Every winter, the area of the park near the Serpentine Lake holds the festive Winter Wonderland Christmas fair and market **PAGE 150**, while Hyde Park will also host the London 2012 triathlon and open water swimming events. And that's not even mentioning the famous Speakers' Corner, where many public speakers find themselves in checkmate on a daily basis.

HYDE PARK © PRESS ASSOCIATION

NINE OF THE BEST

LONDON COMEDY CLUBS

If you're on the hunt for giggles then you're in the right place: London boasts a rip-roaring array of comedy clubs whether you're after slapstick, deadpan, sarcasm, filth or clever humour.



01 Amused Moose Soho GREEK STREET, W1
Attracts the very best in alternative stand-up – plus top names trying out new material (performing unadvertised and incognito).



02 Comedy Cafe RIVINGTON STREET, EC2A
Purpose-built temple of laughs in Shoreditch has a reputation as the venue most favoured by established acts and new performers alike.



03 Up the Creek GREENWICH, SE10
Intimate Greenwich venue was voted London's best comedy club by The Guardian and gave debuts to Jimmy Carr and Harry Hill.



04 The Comedy Tree PUTNEY HIGH ST, SW15
Basement club set up by comics Pete Jonas and Erich McElroy in 2002 and renowned for its quality line-ups and intimate atmosphere.



05 Bloomsbury Theatre GORDON STREET WC1
Student favourite with regular headline acts Russell Howard, Richard Herring, Dave Gorman, Sean Hughes and Micky Flanagan.



06 Soho Theatre DEAN STREET, W1
Multi-stage venue blends mainstream (Michael McIntyre), outsiders (Pajama Men), up-and-coming (Imran Yusuf) and eccentrics (Ed Aczel).



07 Leicester Square Theatre WC2
The 420-seat venue is located under a church and attracts a steady stream of top comedic talent including Stewart Lee and Jerry Sadowitz.



08 Comedy Store OXENDON STREET, SW1
The spiritual home of London stand-up helped kick-start the careers of comedy heavyweights Paul Merton and Eddie Izzard.



09 Hampstead Comedy Club NW1
Deadpan Ivor Dembina's pub club delivers a consistently strong array of top class acts for under a tenner every Saturday night.

1. AMUSED MOOSE, BILL BAILEY, COURTESY NICK J WEBB 2. COMEDY CAFE © COMEDY CAFE 3. UP THE CREEK © PRESS ASSOCIATION 4. THE COMEDY TREE © THE COMEDY TREE 5. BLOOMSBURY THEATRE © BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 6. SOHO THEATRE © BRONY KIMMINGS 7. LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE, COURTESY EASTLOCUM 8. COMEDY STORE © PA 9. HAMPSTEAD COMEDY CLUB, COURTESY HAMPSTEAD COMEDY CLUB

LONDON: THE VENUE FOR SPORT

Major grounds in and around London make it a sports fan's dream *By Felix Lowe*



01 With 15 league stadiums, London has more professional football grounds than any other capital city (above: Arsenal's Emirates Stadium)

LONDON BOASTS THE TWO BIGGEST STADIA IN THE UK - Wembley 02 and Twickenham 03 - and more top flight football grounds than any city in Europe. In fact, if every sports venue in the capital were being used at the same time, more than 650,000 spectators could get a slice of the action. What's more, this figure discounts the many stadia, grounds and horse racing tracks within an hour's train ride of London - plus the extensive venues for the London 2012 Olympics PAGE 102, which would easily take the tally above one million.

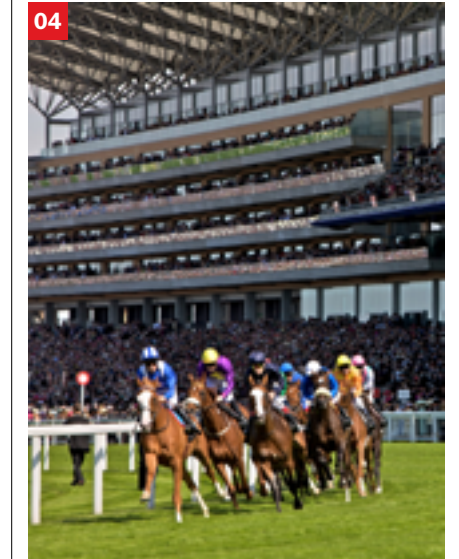
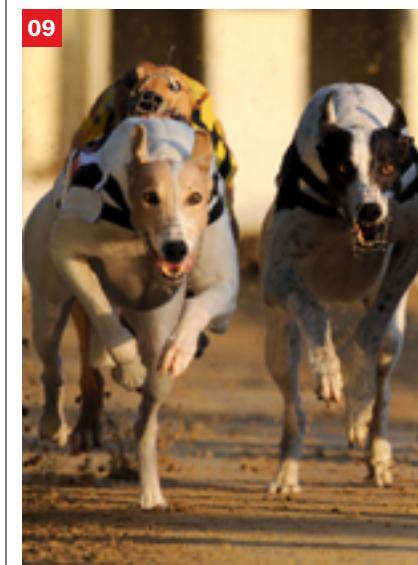
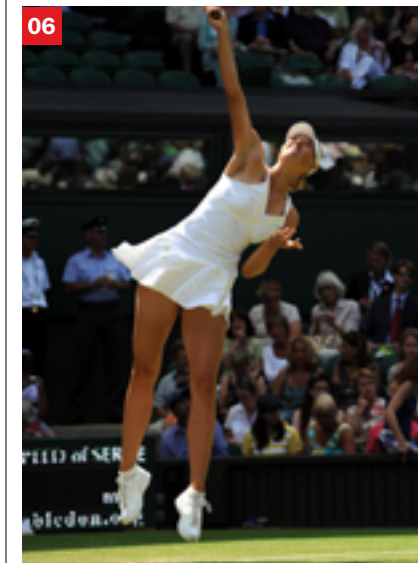
The 90,000-capacity Wembley Stadium 02 is London's biggest sports arena and was opened in 2007 after a full rebuild to the tune of £757 million. The second largest stadium in Europe, it took over three years to build and is located on the site of the previous 1923 Wembley Stadium, often referred to as "The Twin Towers", which was demolished in 2003. Those famous towers have been replaced with a soaring 134m-high arch - the longest single span roof structure in the world - which is visible from most of London.

As well as being the home of the England national football team and holding the latter stages of various domestic club football competitions (including the FA Cup Final PAGE 56), Wembley also hosts the Rugby League Challenge Cup Final PAGE 113 and the annual NFL International Series game PAGE 138. The stadium will host the 2013 Champions League final just two years after it saw Barcelona beat Manchester United in the 2011 final.

More so than any other capital city in Europe, London is incredibly well represented in club football. While Paris has one major football side, Rome has two and Madrid four, London currently has five top-flight football sides, with another half-dozen on the fringes. Arsenal's Emirates Stadium 01 - completed in 2006 as a replacement for the much-loved Highbury - is the largest club stadium in the capital. Seating 60,361 and boasting the Premier League's most immaculate pitch, the Emirates is a suitably slick stadium for one of football's most entertaining sides. While Arsenal's rivals Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea are both looking to move out of their respective stadia at White Hart Lane and Stamford Bridge, fans of Fulham FC are quite happy with their charming riverside home, Craven Cottage. Located in Bishop's Park by the Thames in south-west London, it's easily one of the most idyllic grounds in English football.

Perhaps the only part of London where pubs will show rugby matches in preference to football is Twickenham, home of English rugby. The 82,000-capacity "Twickers" is England's second largest stadium, hosting all England home games PAGE 149 & 159 as well as the Middlesex Sevens, the Aviva Premiership final, the LV Cup and Heineken Cup matches, rugby league's Challenge Cup final, and the majority of Barbarians international matches. Nothing quite beats the spine-tingling sensation of standing on the steeply banked sides of Twickenham as the crowd sings Swing Low, Sweet Chariot in unison.

EMIRATES STADIUM, COURTESY EMIRATES STADIUM



2. WEMBLEY STADIUM, COURTESY WEMBLEY STADIUM IMAGE 3. TWICKENHAM © PRESS ASSOCIATION 4. ASCOT RACECOURSE, COURTESY ASCOT RACECOURSE 5. 02, COURTESY 02 6. WIMBLEDON © PRESS ASSOCIATION 7. HURLINGHAM CLUB, COURTESY PRESS ASSOCIATION 8. BOAT RACE, COURTESY PRESS ASSOCIATION 9. WIMBLEDON GREYHOUND STADIUM, COURTESY PRESS ASSOCIATION 10. INVESTEC 1ST CRICKET, COURTESY MARYLEBONE CRICKET CLUB

Unlike football and rugby, there isn't much singing at tennis matches – it just wouldn't be cricket, so to speak. Although fans at the All England Club at Wimbledon **12** have in the past been entertained by Sir Cliff Richard quite literally singing in the rain, silence in the stands during play is encouraged – which only heightens the charged atmosphere once a point is won and the crowd erupts in rapturous applause. And of course, now Centre Court has a retractable roof over its hallowed green turf there'll be no need for Cliff's impromptu sing-alongs at all.

Wimbledon's 19 tournament courts come alive for two weeks every summer as crowds flock to support the likes of Nadal, Federer and Djokovic **PAGE 81**. If you don't have a ticket for one of the main courts, there's always the grassy Aorangi terrace (previously Henman Hill, now Murray Mount) where fans gather with picnics, Pimm's and strawberries with cream. Held the month before Wimbledon, the AEGON Championships **PAGE 160** at the Queen's Club in Barons Court also attracts some of the biggest names in the men's game.

Two other multi-purpose venues also host tennis games in London: the O2 Arena (for the annual ATP World Tour Finals **PAGE 147**) and the Royal Albert Hall (for Masters and Seniors tennis **PAGE 160**). The O2 Arena is being increasingly used as an indoor sports venue, hosting a wide array of events including hockey, basketball **05**, boxing, martial arts, wrestling, darts and gymnastics (it was the venue for the 2009 World Artistic Gymnastics Championships).

It's been happy days for the England cricket team in recent years and Londoners are graced with two world-class cricket grounds: Lord's **10 11** and the Oval. Often dubbed the "spiritual home of cricket", Lord's has a capacity of 32,000 and is a wonderful blend of the ancient and the modern, with the resplendent Victorian era Pavilion facing the award-winning and stylishly futuristic Media Centre.

An Ashes (England v Australia) Test match at Lord's **PAGE 112** is thought to be just about the biggest game in cricket – and tickets are almost as highly sought-after as Centre Court tickets for the Wimbledon finals. Across the river in south London, The Kia Oval does not share quite the same mystique as Lord's, but the 23,000-seater ground is a wonderful place to watch a game of cricket, with matches against the West Indies and India particularly atmospheric given the area's large ethnic minority populations.

Horse racing fans have a handful of world-class racecourses all within an hour's train ride from the city. Ascot **04**, just six

miles from Windsor Castle, hosts the prestigious King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes in July as well as the celebrated Royal Ascot meet **PAGE 79**. Located on the Sussex Downs, the historic Goodwood is one of the most beautiful racecourses in the world and hosts the annual Glorious Goodwood five-day meeting, one of the highlights of the British flat racing calendar. Both the Epsom Derby – arguably the most famous horse race in the world – and the Epsom Oaks take part at Epsom Downs Racecourse in early June **PAGE 75**. Kempton Park, the people's racecourse, is a much more relaxed affair, with no dress code beyond a vague adherence to respectability. Kempton's most famous races are held during the Christmas Festival on Boxing Day **PAGE 162**, including the King George VI Chase.

Horses are also the star of the show in the annual Polo in the Park event in Fulham's Hurlingham Park **07 PAGE 77** which attracts thousands of spectators in early June. It's not only horses that Londoners enjoy betting on: while dog racing is becoming rarer and rarer there are still three functioning greyhound stadiums in London, at Wimbledon **09**, Romford and Crayford. Of course, it's not just animals that can run around tracks: athletics has always been popular in London, and the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre hosts international athletics events inside a 15,000-seater stadium.

One entirely unique sporting venue worth adding to the list is both accessible and entirely free for all: the banks of the river Thames **08**. Every year around April, England's most famous universities – Oxford and Cambridge – row off in the famous four-mile Boat Race from Putney Bridge to Mortlake **PAGE 34**. While it's one of London's quirky traditions, it's

also a spectacular display of strength and teamwork. What's more, around a quarter of a million fans line the bank of the river, ostensibly making it the capital's largest spectator sport. By the same token, the streets of London host numerous large scale sporting events such as the finale of the Tour of Britain **PAGE 125** bike race and the London Marathon **PAGE 38**, both of which usually finish on The Mall.

This summer London's reputation as a prime destination for spectator sports will take on a whole new dimension as the Olympics come to town. London 2012 will reaffirm London's place at the top of the sporting map – and the wonderful array of venues that have risen from nothing in the Olympic Park in Stratford **PAGE 43** will give sports fans even more options going forward, most notably the state-of-the-art Velodrome, Aquatics Centre and Olympic Stadium.



11 The first test match to be played at Lord's was in 1884 between England and Australia



12 Wimbledon is the only Grand Slam tennis tournament that is played on grass courts

LORD'S CRICKET GROUND, COURTESY MARYLEBONE CRICKET CLUB PAGE 44 WIMBLEDON © AETIC

LONDON OLYMPICS VENUES

LONDON'S OLYMPIC PARK

Built on the site of an industrial and neglected chunk of east London, the 2.5 square km Olympic Park has transformed London's Stratford and will provide a green backdrop to the Games.



Olympic Stadium

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

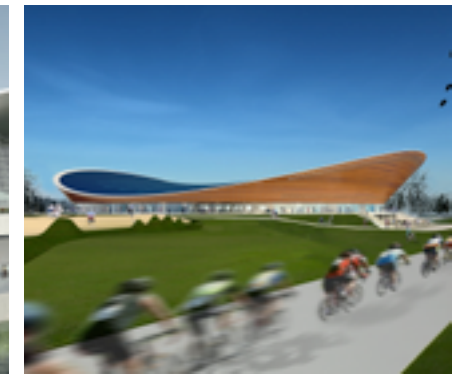
The grand 80,000-capacity sustainably built stadium is the centre-point of the Games



Aquatics Centre

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

2,000 seater swimming and diving venue designed by the acclaimed Iraqi-born architect Zaha Hadid



Velodrome

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

Nicknamed 'The Pringle', the 6,000-seat gem is the most striking of the venues in the Olympic Park



BMX Track

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

Undulating 400m track with 6,000 temporary seats will become a new public VeloPark after the Games



Basketball Arena

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

12,000-capacity arena is one of the largest temporary venues ever built for any Olympics



Eton Manor

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

Redeveloped sports club with 10,500 seats will host the wheelchair tennis Paralympic events



Copper Box Handball Arena

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

Inventive copper-clad arena is one of the Olympic Park's greenest initiatives with capacity of 7,000



Riverbank Hockey Arena

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

Eye-catching pitches will host Olympic hockey and Paralympic football in front of 15,000 spectators



Water Polo Arena

LONDON OLYMPIC PARK

5,000-seat arena shaped like a giant wedge of cheese will be taken down and recycled after the Games

OLYMPIC VENUES AROUND TOWN

Some of London's most iconic landmarks will act as a fitting backdrop for many Olympic and Paralympic events to be held between the Central and River Zones and a bit further afield.



Earls Court

WEST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Historic west London venue to host the Olympic volleyball competitions



ExCeL Centre

EAST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Most used venue outside the Olympic Park with 143 sessions of 13 sports



Greenwich Park

SOUTH EAST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Our oldest Royal Park will be the perfect backdrop for the equestrian events



Horse Guards Parade

CENTRAL LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

5,000 tons of sand will be dumped at HGP for the beach volleyball events



Hyde Park

CENTRAL LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Royal park and its boating lake to host triathlon and marathon swimming



Lord's Cricket Ground

NORTH LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

The spiritual home of cricket will stage the London 2012 archery competition



North Greenwich Arena - O²

EAST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Former Millennium Dome (O2) hosts gymnastics and basketball finals



The Mall

CENTRAL LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

The Queen can watch the cycling and marathon from her Palace balcony



Royal Artillery Barracks

EAST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Woolwich's long military history remembered with shooting events



Wembley Arena

NORTH WEST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Music and comedy venue transformed for badminton and rhythmic gymnastics



Wembley Stadium

NORTH WEST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Redeveloped home of English football will be main Olympic football hub



Wimbledon

SOUTH WEST LONDON OLYMPIC VENUE

Spiritual home of grass-court tennis will be a worthy Olympic tennis venue

OLYMPIC VENUES OUTSIDE TOWN

From Glasgow in the north to Weymouth in the south, much of the UK will get a large slice of the Olympic action – as well as closer venues within striking distance of London.



Hampton Court Palace

WEST OF LONDON

Oldest surviving Tudor palace in England to host Olympic cycling time trials



Brands Hatch

KENT

Former British GP circuit to host start and finish of Paralympic road cycling



Eton Dorney

WEST OF LONDON

Competition facility near Windsor to host rowing and canoe sprint events



Lee Valley White Water Centre

NORTH EAST LONDON

Brand-new state-of-the-art canoeing centre 30km north of the Olympic Park



Hadleigh Farm

ESSEX

Undulating park with wonderful woodland for the mountain bike events



Weymouth & Portland

DORSET

Picturesque south coast venue in Dorset for Olympic and Paralympic sailing

Football stadiums around the UK

HAMPDEN PARK (GLASGOW), OLD TRAFFORD (MANCHESTER), ST JAMES' PARK (NEWCASTLE), CITY OF COVENTRY STADIUM, MILLENNIUM STADIUM (CARDIFF).

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