

SATURDAY 16 APRIL 2011

SAT 19:00 Yellowstone (b00jrh7r)
Summer

As the spring melts the winter snow, the full extent of Yellowstone is gradually revealed. Now, from the surrounding lowlands herds of elk, pronghorn and bison return from their winter feeding grounds to take advantage of America's richest natural grasslands - right in the heart of Yellowstone. In only a few weeks, a brutally harsh deep freeze has been transformed into a flower-decked nursery perfect for the year's newborn animals. There is also a new cast of characters that emerge bleary-eyed from hibernation as grizzly bears begin to teach their young the secrets of survival in Yellowstone - how to hunt fish in the still-frozen rivers and, as the season progresses, when to move out through valleys and grasslands into summer forests and up into Yellowstone's alpine peaks. In this spectacular wilderness, over 10,000ft high, they slide and scabble, hunting millions of tiny moths buried under rocks on the barren slopes.

But summer here is fickle - even on Midsummer's Day, winter can descend from the surrounding mountains bringing punishing snows to fragile flower meadows. August is the only month in the year when it does not snow, but then, just as it seems the easy living of summer has finally arrived, it is brought to an abrupt end as fires sweep through the forest, laying Yellowstone to waste.

Yellowstone is the most geothermally active place on earth. There are 10,000 boiling springs, bubbling mudpots and fumaroles there, and more geysers than in all the rest of the world put together. For some, nature's fountains are more than just a marvel, they are an obsession. 'Geyser Gazers' have seen them all and can even imitate them.

SAT 20:00 If Walls Could Talk: The History of the Home (b0109gmn)
The Living Room

Lucy Worsley, chief curator of the historic royal palaces, looks at the room that has had more names and been through more changes than any other in the house. She tries out the communal medieval great hall, holds a candlelit tea party in a Georgian drawing room, explores the development of taste in a grand country house, discovers the wonders that gas and electric lighting brought to the Victorian parlour, and experiences leisure 1950s style. Includes interviews with historian Amanda Vickery and writer Adrian Tinniswood.

SAT 21:00 Spiral (b010j4ms)
Series 3: The Butcher of La Villette

Episode 5

Police manage to get their suspect remanded in custody, but a series of unexpected revelations threatens to jeopardise the solidity of their case. The infamous accused, by now known as the Butcher of La Villette, is defended by none other than the fearsome Josephine Karlsson. Judge Roban's uncharacteristically hasty actions are thought to compromise his impartiality. Settling in his new role as barrister, Pierre Clement finds himself roped into dealing with an unusual case.

SAT 22:00 Spiral (b010j4mv)
Series 3: The Butcher of La Villette

Episode 6

With the main suspect due to be released and an alarming number of procedural blunders stacking up on the record, Captain Berthaud's team is now on the back foot. When Judge Roban transfers the case to the Crime Squad, Laure's reaction is surprising, but she remains doggedly determined to catch her killer.

Meanwhile, Gilou is in trouble. A victorious Josephine Karlsson finds no time to gloat, as shady past connections return to haunt her. Judge Roban realises the extent of his brother's involvement in the Villdieu bribery case.

SAT 22:55 Twenty Twelve (b0109dvv)
Series 1

Episode 5

There are only three applicants for the post of Curator of the Cultural Olympiad, so how difficult can it be to select the best candidate? As Ian Fletcher and his team find out, it is almost impossible. As if that wasn't enough, their ultimate boss, Sebastian Coe, has decided that it would be good for the profile of Twenty Twelve if members of the team entered the London Marathon.

As the pressure on Ian as Head of Deliverance gradually

increases, the cracks in his marriage are starting to get wider and wider. Could this possibly mean that the secret hopes of his ever-loyal PA Sally might one day move closer to fulfilment?

SAT 23:25 Fanny Hill (b00856dh)
Episode 2

Andrew Davies's two-part adaptation of John Cleland's infamous, classic 18th-century novel, Fanny Hill. In need of money, Fanny becomes mistress to the enigmatic Mr H. Jealous of Fanny's love for Charles, he expels Fanny from his home and she seeks refuge in Mrs Cole's brothel. However, Fanny is thrown on to the streets when the brothel is closed. Rescuing the elderly Mr Goodyear, Fanny receives a handsome inheritance for her companionship. Charles pursues Fanny and they plan their future.

SAT 00:25 Top of the Pops (b0109hhv)

Classic Top of the Pops, as Dave Lee Travis introduces performances by Fox, Sailor, Smoke, Eric Carmen, the Stylistics and Brotherhood of Man from April 1976.

SAT 01:00 The Horizon Guide to Space Shuttles (b0109cc7)

In 2011, after more than 30 years of service, America's space shuttle took to the skies for the last time. Its story has been characterised by incredible triumphs, but blighted by devastating tragedies - and the BBC and Horizon have chronicled every step of its career. This unique and poignant Horizon Guide brings together coverage from three decades of programmes to present a biography of the shuttle and to ask what its legacy will be. Will it be remembered as an impressive chapter in human space exploration, or as a fatally flawed white elephant?

SAT 02:00 Yellowstone (b00jrh7r)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

SAT 03:00 If Walls Could Talk: The History of the Home (b0109gmn)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

SUNDAY 17 APRIL 2011

SUN 19:00 The Great Estate: The Rise & Fall of the Council House (b0109dvs)

Journalist and author Michael Collins presents a hard-hitting and heartwarming history of one of Britain's greatest social revolutions - council housing.

At its height in the mid-1970s, council housing provided homes for over a third of the British population. From the 'homes for heroes' cottages that were built in the wake of the First World War to the much-maligned, monolithic high rises of the 60s and 70s, Collins embarks on a grand tour of Britain's council estates.

He visits Britain's first council estate, built as an antidote to London's disease and crime-ridden Victorian slums, the groundbreaking flats that made inter-war Liverpool the envy of Europe, the high rise estate in Sheffield that has become the largest listed building in the world, and the estate built on the banks of the Thames that was billed as 'the town of the 21st century'.

Along the way he meets the people whose lives were shaped by an extraordinary social experiment that began with a bang at the start of the 20th century and ended with a whimper 80 years later.

SUN 20:00 Amazing Gracie: The Gracie Fields Story (b0074qlt)

A look at the legacy of actress, singer and comedienne Gracie Fields who, during her lifetime, was a national institution. Through interviews and some previously unseen archive footage, the programme explores the extraordinary singing voice, comic genius and unique talent that made her arguably the greatest female entertainer Britain has ever produced.

'Our Gracie' was one of the world's first megastars: not so much a person as an event. The secret of her popularity lay in her relationship with her audience, as she goaded them into enjoyment, fed them the kind of cheek that passes for affection and appealed to a shared contempt for pretension.

Her films were sentimental and reassuring, but they also tapped into real social anxieties and reflected the spirit of a troubled pre-war decade. When the press began its lengthy campaign of vilification against her, after she moved to America during World War Two to prevent her Italian husband from being interned, the public, by and large, remained loyal. From her triumphant return to the London stage in the late 1940s until her death some 30 years later, she continued to maintain her place

in the nation's heart.

Fields, although still a huge star in many people's living memory, encapsulates the spirit of a bygone age. It is too easy to say we don't make them like that anymore; the truth is, we no longer want to. Our national institutions are built on shakier foundations these days and the sheer uncomplicated pleasure that she delivered for the best part of a century seems a world away. This documentary reminds us of what we have lost.

SUN 21:00 Gracie! (b00p1p41)

Singer and comedienne Gracie Fields from Rochdale was the nation's darling. Beginning on the cusp of World War II and at the phenomenal peak of her career, this heart-breaking love story tells of Gracie's relationship with Italian-born Hollywood director Monty Banks and its staggering repercussions.

SUN 22:20 Spitfire Women (b00tw1m1)

During World War II, a remarkable band of female pilots fought against all odds for the right to aid the war effort. Without these Spitfire Women, the war may never have been won.

These trailblazers were part of the Air Transport Auxiliary, a thousand-strong organisation that delivered aircraft to the frontline RAF during Britain's darkest hours. Every day, responsibility fell on their shoulders to get the planes to the fighters, which often pushed them into dangerous and even deadly situations.

Using interviews with the last few surviving veterans, archive footage and dramatic reconstruction, this documentary brings to life the forgotten story of the ATA. The resilience of these women in the face of open discrimination is one of the most inspiring and overlooked milestones in women's rights. Their story is one of courage, sexism and patriotism, but above all a story about women who want to break the confines of the world they live in and reach for the skies.

SUN 23:20 Robert Plant: By Myself (b00y78w)

Documentary in which Robert Plant discusses his musical journey from Stourbridge, the British blues boom, superstardom with Led Zeppelin in the 70s to 2010's Band of Joy album. He also looks at his work with the Honeydrippers and North African musicians, his reunion with Jimmy Page and his pairing with Alison Krauss.

SUN 00:20 Electric Proms (b00y78y)
2010

Robert Plant

Robert Plant in performance at the Roundhouse with his new Band of Joy, featuring producer-guitarist Buddy Miller and harmony vocals from Patti Griffin. They perform songs from the hit album Band of Joy and reinterpret songs from Robert's past, including some Led Zeppelin classics. Also features a finale in which the Band of Joy are joined by the mass voices of the Oriana Choir.

SUN 01:20 Amazing Gracie: The Gracie Fields Story (b0074qlt)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

SUN 02:20 Gracie! (b00p1p41)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

MONDAY 18 APRIL 2011

MON 19:00 World News Today (b010j64t)

The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

MON 19:30 The Weather (b00jz8gj)

Rain

Documentary series about the weather. The rain is an essential part of being British, giving us the English lawn, the sliding tackle and endless grounds for complaint, but what do we really know about it?

The programme uncovers the true shape of a raindrop, shows how and why rain falls, and tells remarkable stories of how we have adapted or succumbed to this elemental force of nature, such as James Glaisher's seven-mile hot-air balloon ascent in 1862, and how Charles Macintosh invented the waterproof coat.

The Victorians believed that they could master the rain and push it aside, but today climate change threatens us with rain that is wilder and more unpredictable than ever.

MON 20:30 The Beauty of Diagrams (b00wltpx)
DNA

Series in which mathematician Marcus du Sautoy explores the stories behind some of the world's most familiar and influential scientific diagrams.

In the last hundred years, one diagrammatic image stands above all others. It represents a scientific breakthrough that has been voted the most significant in the 20th century, more important than penicillin or the first working computer.

The double helix shows us what the structure of our DNA looks like. Francis Crick and James Watson announced their discovery in Nature magazine in April 1953, and their article included a diagram of the structure by Odile Crick. The image she drew has become so well known and loved that we now find it in a whole range of consumer products - there are double helix ties, dogs chews and even a perfume.

So has the image of the double helix become so divorced from its original scientific setting that no one knows what it really is or what it stands for?

MON 21:00 The Gene Code (b010j64w)
The Book of Life

Dr Adam Rutherford takes the viewer on a rollercoaster ride as he explores the consequences of one of the biggest scientific projects of all time - the decoding of the entire human genome in 2000. Adam discovers that every human carries the entire story of life on earth hidden in his or her DNA and sees how we are all linked directly to the origins of life and to the first creatures with backbones. He also investigates the implications of the fact that for much of its existence, the human race was an endangered species.

MON 22:00 Twenty Twelve (b010j64y)
Series 1

Episode 6

The decision to hold equestrian events in Greenwich Park is one of the most controversial choices made by the Olympic authorities. Among the many groups of people who are against it are local residents, led by self-styled maverick film director Tony Ward. Given that it is now over 30 years since he made his one and only successful film, Ward has had a lot of time on his hands to think about how angry he is and to plan his campaign of protest.

It starts with the arrival of an enormous pile of horse manure on the pavement outside the Olympic Deliverance Commission offices and climaxes with a live debate with Head of Deliverance Ian Fletcher on Radio 4's Today programme.

Meanwhile in Ian's personal life, manure of a different kind finally hits the fan. Fortunately his ever-loyal PA Sally is on hand and completely ready to pick up the pieces.

MON 22:30 Lead Balloon (b00g6bnp)
Series 3

Mistake

Sitcom about ex-celebrity comedian Rick Spleen. Mel has to run her agency from home while the office is done up, so Rick and Marty are banished to the kitchen. Rick complains at being disturbed by Magda's cleaning activities and by Ben and Sam making samosas to sell at a free festival. When Marty takes a shine to Mel's assistant Izzy, it seems like it is turning into a disaster for Rick - until he overhears Mel talking about a lucrative presenting job that one of her clients is up for. He decides that the job should be his.

MON 23:00 Rubicon (b0109hhz)
The First Day of School

Will starts his new job as David's successor and is introduced 'upstairs' to the other section heads as he tries to unravel the clues that David has left him. Katherine Rhumor is discovering more about her late husband Tom.

MON 23:45 Lead Balloon (b00gd1kf)
Series 3

Nuts

Sitcom about ex-celebrity comedian Rick Spleen. Rick is looking forward to spending a quiet Christmas at home with Mel. It will be a well-earned break from the challenging acting role he is currently immersed in - playing the part of Mr Smeed in a panto. Marty is no fan of pantomime, or of Christmas in general, and plans to head off for some winter sun - preferably

to a country where carol-singing is punishable by death.

Meanwhile Sam is busy baking some mince pies for Ben. Rick thinks his daughter is being sweetly old fashioned until Marty points out that the pies may contain a certain special ingredient. Michael, the deranged local café owner has his own reasons for looking forward to Christmas. To everyone's amazement, he has finally found a girlfriend.

Only Magda fails to get into the Christmas spirit. She is officially in mourning, as the President of her country has died. As Rick points out, at least it means he'll avoid the war crimes trial.

As the countdown to Christmas begins, the problems stack up for Rick. The bargain tree that he bought is losing its needles. It looks like Magda is going to be joining them for Christmas dinner. And when Rick accidentally injures an old lady, there's a very unseasonal confrontation with his neighbour Clive. It soon turns into a Christmas that Rick will never forget - for all the wrong reasons.

MON 00:25 Horizon (b00z6zc7)
2010-2011

Are We Still Evolving?

Dr Alice Roberts asks one of the great questions about our species: are we still evolving?

There's no doubt that we're a product of millions of years of evolution.

But thanks to modern technology and medicine, did we escape Darwin's law of the survival of the fittest?

Alice follows a trail of clues, from ancient human bones to studies of remarkable people living in the most inhospitable parts of the planet and the frontiers of genetic research, to discover if we are still evolving, and where we might be heading.

MON 01:25 Twenty Twelve (b010j64y)
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 today]

MON 01:55 The Weather (b00jz8gj)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

MON 02:55 The Gene Code (b010j64w)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

MON 03:55 Twenty Twelve (b010j64y)
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 today]

TUESDAY 19 APRIL 2011

TUE 19:00 World News Today (b010jrr8)

The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

TUE 19:30 Birds Britannia (b00vv6vm)
Waterbirds

The British have always had a passion for waterbirds and the wild and lonely places where they live, but by destroying these vast wetlands we drove them to the brink of extinction. At the eleventh hour the tide turned, and instead of exploiting these birds we chose to protect them.

TUE 20:30 Johnny Kingdom's Year with the Birds (b00vnf8g)
Episode 1

Johnny Kingdom, gravedigger-turned-amateur filmmaker spends a year recording the bird life in and around his home on his beloved Exmoor.

Johnny has spent three years creating a wildlife habitat on his 52-acre patch of land on the edge of Exmoor. He's been busy nailing nest boxes on tree trunks, planting a wildflower meadow, dredging his pond, putting up remote cameras and wiring them up to a viewing station in his cabin on the land - all the time hoping against hope that not only will he attract new wildlife but also that he will be able to film it.

This year he is turning his attention to the bird life, hoping to follow some of the species he finds near his home and on his land, across the seasons. We see the transitions from the lovely autumn mists of the oak wood, through the sparkling snow-cold landscape of a north Devon winter, into spring's woodland

carpet of bluebells and finally the golden glow of early summer.

The bulk of the series is from Johnny's own camera. Don't expect the Natural History Unit - instead expect passion, enthusiasm, humour and an exuberant love of the landscape and its wildlife.

The series begins at the end of autumn, with Johnny clearing out bird boxes and sorting out his new remote cameras in preparation for the winter. There are two birds in particular that he wants to film - the great spotted woodpecker and the wren. But the harsh winter looks as if it could spell trouble for the wrens and it will be spring before Johnny knows how well they have fared.

He has better luck with the woodpecker and eventually finds their roost. Meanwhile, at home, he struggles to get shots of a mistle thrush as his wife Julie and his neighbours disturb this shy bird as it feasts on a rowan tree.

TUE 21:00 David Lean in Close-Up With Jonathan Ross (b00jnkgb)

Jonathan Ross takes a look into the life and times of one of the greatest film directors of our time, David Lean.

TUE 22:30 Breaking the Mould: The Story of Penicillin (b00ly0t1)

History books tell us that Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, but that's not the whole story. This drama uncovers the forgotten team involved in the development and manufacture of the drug that transformed medicine.

TUE 23:50 Aristotle's Lagoon (b00q0hh2)

In the 4th century BC the Greek philosopher Aristotle travelled to Lesbos, an island in the Aegean teeming, then as now, with wildlife. His fascination with what he found there, and his painstaking study of it, led to the birth of a new science - biology. Professor Armand Leroi follows in Aristotle's footsteps to discover the creatures, places and ideas that inspired the philosopher in his pioneering work.

TUE 00:50 Birds Britannia (b00vv6vm)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

TUE 01:50 Johnny Kingdom's Year with the Birds (b00vnf8g)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:30 today]

TUE 02:20 David Lean in Close-Up With Jonathan Ross (b00jnkgb)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL 2011

WED 19:00 World News Today (b010jrlv)

The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

WED 19:30 At Home with the Georgians (b00wmxww)
A Woman's Touch

The British obsession with beautifying our homes is not a new phenomenon - it began with a vengeance in the Georgian era. In this second programme of the series historian Amanda Vickery - on a journey from stately home to pauper's attic - reveals how 'taste' became the buzzword of the age 300 years ago and gave women a new outlet for their creativity, raising their status in the home as a consequence. But with it came new anxieties about getting it right.

WED 20:30 Petworth House: The Big Spring Clean (b010jrlx)

Pride & Petworth

Andrew Graham-Dixon uncovers the history of Petworth House, as he learns how to vacuum-clean sculptures, perfectly polish banisters, preserve Capability Brown's immense parkland and buff-up baroque angels in the chapel.

WED 21:00 If Walls Could Talk: The History of the Home (b010jrlz)

The Bathroom

Lucy Worsley, chief curator of the historic royal palaces, focuses on the bathroom - a room that didn't even exist in many British homes until 50 years ago. From the medieval bath houses to London Bridge's communal loos to finding out how piped water got to our homes and finally getting to the bottom

of the Crapper myth at Stoke's Toilet Museum. Lucy tracks how our attitude to washing has changed over the centuries and the development of what we think of now as the most essential room in the house.

WED 22:00 Maid in Britain (b00wyr1r)

A look at how domestic servants have been portrayed on television, from The Forsyte Saga in the 60s to Downton Abbey and Upstairs, Downstairs today. Why are butlers, cooks and nannies such staples of television drama long after their real-life roles have declined? Are these shows socially relevant or mere escapism, and how accurately does television reflect the experiences of real-life servants?

Featuring archive from Brideshead Revisited, Jeeves and Wooster and The Duchess of Duke Street, contributors include Julian Fellowes (Downton Abbey), Jean Marsh (Upstairs, Downstairs), Susan Hampshire (The Forsyte Saga) and Wendy Craig (Nanny).

WED 23:00 Spiral (b010j4ms)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Saturday]

WED 23:55 Spiral (b010j4mv)

[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 on Saturday]

WED 00:55 The Gene Code (b010j64w)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Monday]

WED 01:55 At Home with the Georgians (b00wmxxw)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

WED 02:55 Petworth House: The Big Spring Clean (b010jlsx)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:30 today]

WED 03:25 If Walls Could Talk: The History of the Home (b010jlsz)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

THURSDAY 21 APRIL 2011

THU 19:00 World News Today (b010jsrk)

The latest national and international news, exploring the day's events from a global perspective.

THU 19:30 Top of the Pops (b010jsrm)

We travel back to 1976 to track the year that sculpted pop. 'Diddy' David Hamilton introduces performances from Jimmy James and the Vagabonds, John Miles, Harpo, Sheer Elegance, the Rubettes, Gilbert O'Sullivan, Abba and Brotherhood of Man.

THU 20:00 Birth of the British Novel (b00ydl1p)

Author Henry Hitchings explores the lives and works of Britain's radical and pioneering 18th-century novelists who, in just 80 years, established all the literary genres we recognise today. It was a golden age of creativity led by Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, Fanny Burney and William Godwin, amongst others. Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels, Tom Jones and Tristram Shandy are novels that still sparkle with audacity and innovation.

On his journey through 18th-century fiction, Hitchings reveals how the novel was more than mere entertainment, it was also a subversive hand grenade that would change British society for the better. He travels from the homes of Britain's great and good to its lowliest prisons, meeting contemporary writers like Martin Amis, Will Self, Tom McCarthy and Jenny Uglow on the way.

Although 18th-century novels are woefully neglected today compared to those of the following two centuries, Hitchings shows how the best of them can offer as much pleasure to the reader as any modern classic.

THU 21:00 Secrets of the Arabian Nights (b010jt2h)

The Arabian Nights first arrived in the West 300 years ago, and ever since then its stories have entranced generations of children and seduced adults with a vision of an exotic, magical Middle East. Actor and director Richard E Grant wants to know why the book he loved as a child still has such a hold on our imagination.

He travels to Paris to discover how the stories of Sinbad, Ali Baba and Aladdin were first brought to the West by the pioneering Arabist Antoine Galland in the early 18th century.

The Nights quickly became an overnight literary sensation and were quickly translated into all the major European languages. Richard then travels to Cairo to explore the medieval Islamic world which first created them.

He quickly finds that some of the stories can still be deeply controversial, because of their sexually-explicit content. Richard meets the Egyptian writer and publisher Gamal al Ghitani, who received death threats when he published a new edition of the book.

He also finds that the ribald and riotous stories in the Nights represent a very different view of Islam than fundamentalism. Can the Nights still enrich and change the West's distorted image of the Arab world?

THU 22:00 Rubicon (b010jt2l)

Keep the Ends Out

Determined to get to the bottom of her husband's sudden suicide, Katherine Rhumour has further questions for his friend James Wheeler. Will is visited by David's estranged son who wants his father's motorcycle, and is led to another coded clue in the form of a long sequence of ten-digit numbers.

THU 22:40 The Story of Variety with Michael Grade (b00z1z0g)

After the War

Fifty years ago every UK town had a variety theatre. Michael Grade tells the story of this lost world.

THU 23:40 The Story of Variety with Michael Grade (b00z8rd6)

Onto the Box

What happened to the variety stars once the theatres closed and the cameras beckoned? Michael Grade tells the ups and downs of the variety stars on television.

THU 00:40 Secrets of the Arabian Nights (b010jt2h)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

THU 01:40 Birth of the British Novel (b00ydl1p)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

THU 02:40 Top of the Pops (b010jsrm)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

THU 03:10 Secrets of the Arabian Nights (b010jt2h)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

FRIDAY 22 APRIL 2011

FRI 19:00 Opera's Fallen Women (b00zpdwq)

Bizet's Carmen, Puccini's Madame Butterfly, Verdi's Violetta - some of the most famous and powerful roles in opera and they are all, in different ways, fallen women.

And now there's a newcomer to their ranks - Anna Nicole. The Royal Opera's latest smash hit is an operatic version of the life of former Playboy model Anna Nicole Smith. Antonio Pappano, music director of the Royal Opera House and conductor of Anna Nicole, delves into the world of opera's fallen women and discovers how for centuries composers and librettists have used female characters in opera to explore and challenge society's attitudes and prejudices.

FRI 19:30 Opera Italia (b00spgk8)

The Triumph of Puccini

Three-part series tracing the history of Italian opera presented by Antonio Pappano, conductor and music director at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. The series features sumptuous music, stunning Italian locations and some of the biggest names in opera as contributors.

The final episode is devoted to Puccini, the worthy successor to Verdi. Puccini's operas are cinematic in their scale with ravishing, passionate and clever music, as he took Italian opera into the 20th century.

Pappano looks at five of Puccini's most popular operas - La Boheme, Tosca, Madame Butterfly, Gianni Schicchi and Turandot. He travels to Rome to meet stage director Franco Zeffirelli and talk about Puccini and Zeffirelli's famous production of Turandot.

Pappano also talks to one of the great Puccini interpreters, the

soprano Renata Scotta, about the composer, Madame Butterfly and the role of Mimi in La Boheme. Also featured are soprano Angela Gheorghiu, tenors Jonas Kaufmann and Roberto Alagna and baritone Sir Thomas Allen.

FRI 20:30 Transatlantic Sessions (b00mwr5p)

Series 4

Episode 2

Folk musicians come together in what have been called 'the greatest backporch shows ever', as Shetland fiddle virtuoso Aly Bain and dobro ace Jerry Douglas host a Highland gathering of the cream of Nashville, Irish and Scottish talent. Martha Wainwright, Mairead ni Mhaonaigh, Karen Matheson, James Taylor and Donal Lunny are among the featured stars.

FRI 21:00 The Making of Elton John: Madman Across the Water (b00vs4yv)

Documentary exploring Elton John's childhood, apprenticeship in the British music business, sudden stardom in the US at the dawn of the 70s and his musical heyday. Plus the backstory to the album reuniting him with Leon Russell, his American mentor. Features extensive exclusive interviews with Elton, plus colleagues and collaborators including Bernie Taupin, Leon Russell and others.

FRI 22:00 Elton John at the BBC (b00vs5c0)

Elton John's career tracked in archive from performances, interviews and news clips.

FRI 23:00 Electric Proms (b00vt2yz)

2010

Elton John

Elton John in concert at the Roundhouse with friend and mentor Leon Russell, and special guests Plan B and Rumer, performing both classic hits and tracks from his and Leon's album The Union.

FRI 00:05 The Making of Elton John: Madman Across the Water (b00vs4yv)

[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

FRI 01:05 BBC One Sessions (b007chb9)

Elton John

Series of unique, intimate performances by some of the greatest legends and contemporary stars around. Elton John and his band are in concert at LSO St Luke's in Shoreditch, performing some of his most famous hits alongside songs from his latest album, The Captain and the Kid.

FRI 02:00 Electric Proms (b00vt2yz)

[Repeat of broadcast at 23:00 today]

FRI 03:05 Elton John at the BBC (b00vs5c0)

[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 today]