

SATURDAY 09 MARCH 2024

SAT 19:00 Rick Stein's Long Weekends (b0795rt5)
Reykjavik

Rick Stein embarks on a series of culinary long weekends in search of food excellence and brilliant recipes to cook at home, heading to markets, restaurants, wineries, cafes and bars.

Rick enjoys a winter break in Reykjavik in search of the perfect cod and samples succulent fjord-reared roast lamb.

SAT 20:00 South Pacific (b0015j10)
Strange Islands

Flightless parrots, burrowing bats, giant skinks and kangaroos in trees; on the isolated islands of the South Pacific, the wildlife has evolved in extraordinary ways. But island living can carry a high price, for when new species arrive all hell breaks loose. And there lies a puzzle - why do animals perfectly adapted to island life simply give up the ghost? The answer is revealed by the remarkable stories of some unlikely animals that survived on tiny islands off the coast of New Zealand. The human history of the region is further evidence that, however idyllic it may appear, life on a South Pacific island may never be very far from catastrophe.

SAT 21:00 Prisoner (m001w26p)
Series 1

Episode 5

Sammi is caught in a dilemma, knowing that if he comes clean about the illegal restraint on an inmate, he will be ostracised by his fellow officers.

Miriam, now acting as a mule for Kaled, is unprepared when, as a result of a tip-off, sniffer dogs are brought into the prison.

Sammi asks Benji for his help in translating the illicit recording he has made on a contraband mobile phone.

In Danish with English subtitles

SAT 22:00 Prisoner (m001w26t)
Series 1

Episode 6

As news of the death of a prisoner spreads, the guards prepare for trouble. Benji is becoming difficult to handle as he waits for a letter from his girlfriend and has a major setback at his parole hearing. When Henrik is assaulted in his home, his fellow officers believe it to be a revenge attack. Miriam tells Kahled that she has discovered the rat.

In Danish with English subtitles

SAT 23:00 Parkinson (m0013xz5)
Parkinson Meets Michael Crawford

Chat show hosted by Michael Parkinson with special guest Michael Crawford, looking at his life and career. Michael performs Music of the Night from Phantom of the Opera.

SAT 23:55 To the Manor Born (b0078747)
Series 2

Never Be Alone

Stately sitcom. Audrey helps Richard catalogue his antique china, only to discover one piece has been mislaid.

SAT 00:25 Yes, Prime Minister (b0074rz4)
Series 2

A Diplomatic Incident

Classic political sitcom. When Jim Hacker discovers the French are planning some dirty tricks to get political advantage, the PM turns the tables on them.

SAT 00:55 Country Music by Ken Burns (m000bhypr)
Series 1

The Sons and Daughters of America (1964-1968)

The mid to late 60s were a time of cultural upheaval and country, as much as other genres of music, reflected the profound changes in American society.

Loretta Lynn wrote and performed songs that spoke to women

everywhere, Charley Pride rose to stardom, when people responded to his voice instead of the colour of his skin, and Merle Haggard left prison to become the 'Poet of the Common Man'.

Johnny Cash's life and career descended into the chaos of addiction, but he found salvation thanks to the intervention of June Carter and a landmark album.

SAT 01:45 Country Music by Ken Burns (m000byppt)
Series 1

Will the Circle Be Unbroken (1968-1972)

As the Vietnam War intensified, America became more and more divided and country music was not immune. Kris Kristofferson, a former Rhodes scholar and army captain, reinvented himself as a writer whose lyricism set a new standard for country songs. And a hippie band from California, the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, arrived in Nashville to create a landmark album that bridged the gap between generations.

In 1969, Johnny Cash made a triumphant return to the Ryman Auditorium, a venue that had kicked him out years earlier for breaking the footlights. To celebrate, he brought an eclectic range of guests with him from folk, pop, and jazz as well as country music.

Also profiled, the tormented early lives but uplifting careers of George Jones and Tammy Wynette, later known as 'Mr and Mrs Country Music'.

SAT 02:40 South Pacific (b0015j10)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

SUNDAY 10 MARCH 2024

SUN 19:00 Queen Victoria: My Musical Britain (m00052ds)
To celebrate Queen Victoria's 200th birthday, historian Dr Lucy Worsley explores the character and legacy of the famous monarch in a way that has never been attempted before – through music. Lucy reveals how Victoria used music to transform the monarchy from a political power into a benevolent cultural force that brought the country together during a time of great upheaval and change. Lucy also examines the central role music played in Victoria's own life - as a queen, a private person and in her marriage to Prince Albert.

Victoria and Albert also took an active role in reshaping the musical culture of Britain by establishing institutions like the Royal College of Music and the Royal Albert Hall. Together they laid the groundwork for a musical renaissance in Britain which saw a new generation of great British composers reshape the sound of Britain in the 20th century. To bring the story of Britain's great musical revolution to life there are performances from Sir Willard White, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Black Dyke Brass Band and many more.

SUN 20:00 Discovering the Music of Antiquity (m001x1vb)
When a music score is uncovered deep within the storerooms of the Louvre, musical historians scramble to realise the potential of this piece of papyrus. The text's grammatical features give us a clue to the composer's identity: Carcinus, an author cited by Aristotle in his Rhetoric. His name is engraved on a wall in the Parthenon, and the story of his life offers an insight into the history of Greek musicians, who were revered like gods and welcomed across the Mediterranean to take part in competitions modelled on the Olympic Games.

The discovery of the papyrus, more specifically an ancient version of the tragedy entitled Medea, throws open a new mission by researchers to hear the music sung through modern arrangement. But to listen to the Medea as it was heard by the Greeks 2,400 years ago, it still has to be played on period instruments.

From the Greek cities of Anatolia to the Ptolemies' Egypt, from the mythical site of Delphi to the discoveries made in Pompeii, relive this voyage along the Mediterranean coast, where archaeological excavations have unearthed instrument remains.

SUN 21:00 Soprano Sundays (m001sfvp)
Kiri Te Kanawa

Opera singer Kiri Te Kanawa talks to Bernard Levin and sings scenes from Don Giovanni, The Marriage of Figaro, Otello and La Boheme. With Ryland Davies, Elizabeth Bainbridge and the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House conducted by Robin Stapleton.

SUN 22:15 Soprano Sundays (b08h918x)
Kiri Te Kanawa at the BBC

The charismatic New Zealand soprano Dame Kiri Te Kanawa looks back at her life in song through forty years of classic performances from the BBC archives, from her first TV performance on The Harry Secombe Show in 1971 to her appearances on Top of the Pops to sing the rugby anthem World in Union in 1991, plus performances from the Last Night of the Proms and Terry Wogan's chat show.

Dame Kiri's dramatic and operatic skills are captured in the Royal Opera's production of Puccini's Manon, she describes working with Leonard Bernstein, Georg Solti and on Paul McCartney's Liverpool Oratorio, and she recalls the royal wedding in 1981 at which she sang Handel's Let the Bright Seraphim to a global TV audience of 700 million.

There's documentary footage of the house where Kiri grew up in New Zealand (now a car park), she vividly evokes the East End of London, where she studied as a student when she first came to London, and we see her goofing around on the golf course with Plácido Domingo.

As Dame Kiri says in her candid new interview for this programme in which she reflects on her BBC appearances, "If I look back what you have is snippets of my life, I suppose."

SUN 23:15 6 Music Festival (m001x8f1)
2024

The Smile, Young Fathers and Gossip

The Smile, Young Fathers and Gossip live at 6 Music Festival.

SUN 00:15 Country Music by Ken Burns (m000c5yc)
Series 1

Are You Sure Hank Done It This Way? (1973-1983)

The 1970s and early 1980s saw country music entering a vibrant era of new voices and attitudes. Dolly Parton made the crossover to mainstream success and became the most famous woman in country music. In 1980 she achieved an entirely new level of national stardom when she joined Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin in the hit Hollywood movie Nine to Five.

While George Jones and Tammy Wynette seemed to live out their songs' tragic lyrics, Hank Williams Jr emerged from his father's shadow. He performed Hank Williams Sr's music when he was just eight years old, debuted on the Opry at the age of 11 singing Lovesick Blues and recorded an album of his father's hits at 14. But as soon as he turned 18, he dropped his mother as a manager.

SUN 01:10 Country Music by Ken Burns (m000c5yf)
Series 1

Music Will Get Through (1973-1983)

Though no longer heard on country radio for much of the 1970s and early 1980s, bluegrass still had a strong core of avid fans. Marty Stuart toured with Lester Flatt and sometimes with the 'father of bluegrass', Bill Monroe.

Back in his home state of Texas, Willie Nelson discovered a new music scene in Austin, where a mixture of hippies and rednecks seemed to get along and welcomed offbeat artists like Nelson, whose music became a hit.

Ricky Skaggs had deep bluegrass credentials, but his time with Emmylou Harris's Hot Band inspired him to experiment with a sound combining the acoustic instruments of a string band with something more electric. Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings launched the 'Outlaw' movement, and Emmylou Harris bridged folk and rock with country music in a way that influenced a new generation of artists.

SUN 02:00 Country Music by Ken Burns (m000cf2d)
Series 1

Don't Get Above Your Raisin' (1984-1996)

As country music's popularity rocketed, the genre questioned whether it could stay true to its roots. The success of 'New Traditionalists' like Reba McEntire and the Judds suggested it could.

Garth Brooks overcame rejection and exploded onto the scene. And after being left behind by his label, Johnny Cash returned to a studio with just his guitar and his unforgettable voice to record albums that sold millions of copies and earned him the respect of the industry he helped to create. Meanwhile, Rosanne Cash came out of the shadow of her father to start her own music career.

SUN 02:55 Queen Victoria: My Musical Britain (m00052ds)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

MONDAY 11 MARCH 2024

MON 19:00 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m00019ws)
Series 7

Salamanca to Canfranc

Michael Portillo sports a strikingly modern edition of his Bradshaw's Continental Handbook, dated 1936. His destination lies close to his heart: the ancient kingdom of Spain and land of his father, recommended in Michael's guidebook for its exceptional climate and glorious history.

1936 was a turbulent time in Spain, with political upheaval descending into a brutal civil war. Michael begins an emotional rail journey, which takes him deep into his family's past and reveals the tentacles of the regime which forced his father into exile.

Michael begins in the beautiful golden city of Salamanca, where his father was happy as a young, left-wing professor. He visits the university to hear of opposition to the fascist takeover of Spain by General Francisco Franco and gains access to the general's archive of enemies of the state.

In the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, Michael hears how the bombing of a small town in the Basque region in 1937 inspired one of the 20th century's most shocking works of art.

Zaragoza's modern tram network takes Michael to a factory, where he is invited to test-drive new rolling stock destined for Britain. In the shadow of the city's splendid cathedral, Michael learns to dance the jota.

In the northern town of Huesca, Michael meets the son of author George Orwell, who fought against Franco on what was the front line during the Civil War between Nationalist and Republican forces. Together, they visit the preserved trenches, and Michael finds out how Orwell's experiences shaped his novels.

Michael's final stop is on the border with France at Canfranc station. At the time of his guidebook, it was a magnificent terminus, yet today it is ruined and derelict. Michael learns of the role it played in the evacuation of Jews during the Second World War and hears about its forthcoming new lease of life.

MON 20:00 Write Around the World with Richard E. Grant (p09nlf5g)
Series 1

Episode 1

Book and travel lover Richard E. Grant journeys to southern Italy, visiting Naples, Pompeii, Positano and Matera, in the footsteps of writers inspired by the country, its culture and history.

Reading key passages from their books as he goes along, including works by Charles Dickens, Elena Ferrante, Elizabeth Gilbert, Norman Lewis, Robert Harris, Patricia Highsmith and Carlo Levi, Richard learns about both the lives and experiences of these great authors.

His journey gives him fresh insights into the people and diversity of the region as well as its distinctive and captivating landscapes. He also discovers examples of books that have had a direct effect on the area's prosperity.

MON 21:00 The Zaks Affair: Anatomy of a Fake Collection (m001xf4l)
A huge collection of the Russian and Ukrainian art was put on sale in Europe. Paintings were sold for hundreds of thousands of pounds and made their way into European and American museums.

It was said to include over 200 oil paintings of some of the most treasured Russian and Ukrainian constructivist artists, such as El Lissitzky, Exter, Goncharova, Popova and others, putting it among the largest in the world.

But are the paintings fake or real, and is the story of their provenance true or made up?

And who is the mysterious Russian-Israeli dealer behind this collection?

The BBC followed art detectives, forensic experts, leading curators and historians, and a Swiss family who were told their priceless works were worthless.

MON 22:00 Storyville (b001pk70)

The Trials of Oppenheimer

J Robert Oppenheimer was one of the most celebrated scientists of his generation. Shy, arrogant and brilliant, he is best known as the man that led the Manhattan Project to spectacular success.

As the years progressed he also grew into a scientific statesman, leading a government agency, the Atomic Energy Commission, which was trying to develop ways to avoid a nuclear arms race. His attempts at politics, though, were a lot less successful than his scientific endeavours. As he grew more powerful, he started to make serious enemies amongst the establishment, particularly a friend of President Truman's - Lewis Strauss.

This film tells the extraordinary story of the rise and fall of Robert Oppenheimer. David Strathairn, whose previous recreation of this era in Good Night and Good Luck was Oscar-nominated, plays Oppenheimer trying to defend himself as he was effectively put on trial for being a communist. Re-creation is mixed with expert testimony from a definitive range of commentators, ranging from Oppenheimer's Manhattan Project colleagues to academics like Martin Sherwin and Priscilla MacMillan.

Narrated by Zoe Wanamaker, whose own father experienced the virulent anti-communism of McCarthyism first-hand, it weaves Oppenheimer's biography with the dramatic events of his trial and its tragic aftermath. Emotional and compelling, it is a film that, in a time when non-proliferation is firmly back on the agenda, tells us a lot about the perils of mixing science and government.

MON 23:30 The Arts Interviews (m001p8h7)

Christopher Nolan

The BBC's culture editor Katie Razzall talks to Christopher Nolan, one of the world's most renowned film directors and the man behind films such as Memento, Inception and Dunkirk, on the eve of the release of his new film Oppenheimer.

They discuss the Hollywood strikes; AI and film; and why British-born Nolan was drawn to the story of J Robert Oppenheimer, the enigmatic Manhattan Project scientist who had a leading role in developing the atomic bomb.

MON 23:55 The Story of Welsh Art (p097c1qm)

Series 1

Episode 2

Scrambling up the side of one of Wales's highest and most rugged mountains, Huw Stephens retraces the steps of Richard Wilson, an 18th-century artist who changed the course of art history. Bringing harmony and beauty to a terrain previously dismissed as 'God's rubbish tip', he transformed the way Wales was seen by the world. As Huw discovers, he was not the last to do so - JMW Turner first visited Wales aged 17 and would return many times, painting untamed landscapes filled with romance and emotion.

As the 19th century progressed, a very different Wales became the focus of art. In Merthyr Tydfil, once the iron capital of the world, Huw discovers the work of Penry Williams, a local artist who was commissioned to paint the vast Cyfarthfa Ironworks in all their cathedral-like grandeur and glory. As art and industry collided, the people who did the back-breaking work were depicted for the first time.

MON 00:55 Mark Kermode's Secrets of Cinema (m0002pfq)

Oscar Winners: A Secrets of Cinema Special

As the red carpet season reaches its climax, Mark turns his keen eye and sharp wit on past winners of the most prestigious awards of all. What gave them the edge over their rivals? Mark shows that, despite their apparent differences, Oscar-winning films have more in common than you might think. Certain kinds of film recur, such as war, social justice and the all-singing, all-dancing extravaganza. But, as Mark explains, it's not just about your choice of subject; it's how you treat it that counts.

In a special show that ranges from the earliest awards winners to the most recent victors, Mark reveals the films that laid down the template for cinematic glory, celebrates the classics that have endured and savours some of the movies' most acclaimed performances.

MON 01:55 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m00019ws)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

MON 02:55 Write Around the World with Richard E. Grant (p09nlf5g)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024

TUE 19:00 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m0001k7h)
Series 7

Orleans to Reims

Michael Portillo travels from the chateaux of the Loire Valley to the heart of the Champagne region at Reims.

Beginning in historic Orleans, Michael follows his Bradshaw's guide to the magnificent stained-glass windows of the Cathedral of Sainte-Croix, which tell the story of the heroine of France, Joan of Arc. The image of the saintly teenage warrior endures as a symbol of resistance, and her life is celebrated in an annual parade. Michael meets her modern-day incarnation.

Among the spectacular Renaissance palaces and fortresses of the River Loire, Michael is intrigued to discover a castle much modernized during the 1930s, which became a refuge for a British royal couple embroiled in scandal. The wedding of the former king, Edward VIII, and the American divorcee Wallis Simpson at Chateau Candé in the summer of 1937 was shunned by the British establishment.

Michael takes a spin around the track at Le Mans in a French-built car that won two endurance races during the 1920s.

At Versailles, Michael visits the opulent palace and neighbouring Trianon Palace Hotel, where his Bradshaw's guide describes the signing of the Peace Treaty at the end of the First World War.

Arriving in the capital, Paris, Michael heads for Montparnasse, where wildly creative artists and writers of the 1920s and 30s spawned new art movements. Michael joins a life-drawing class at an art school with an impressive legacy.

Backstage at the Folies Bergere, Michael asks the 'enfant terrible' of fashion Jean Paul Gaultier about his homage to the black American dancer of the 1920s Josephine Baker.

East of Paris in champagne country, Michael finishes his journey in style with a tour of the cellars at Domaine Pommery and a glass of fizz with the owner.

TUE 20:00 To the Manor Born (b007876q)

Series 2

Tramps and Poachers

Stately sitcom. Arthur arrives as usual to help out on the Grantleigh estate, but Audrey can't give him work.

TUE 20:30 Yes, Prime Minister (b0074s27)

Series 2

A Conflict of Interest

Classic sitcom. When a scandal breaks in the City, Jim Hacker and Sir Humphrey cannot agree on who should be the new governor of the Bank of England.

TUE 21:00 The Boleyns: A Scandalous Family (p09jgk30)

Series 1

Episode 3

Anne makes her play for the biggest prize in the kingdom, and in doing so changes the course of British history. But the Boleyns have no idea of the high price they will have to pay.

TUE 22:00 Cruel Sea: The Penlee Lifeboat Disaster (b00794gz)

In December 1981, the Penlee lifeboat was called out to help a stricken coaster off the coast of Cornwall. In hurricane winds and sixty foot waves, the crew of the Solomon Browne made a heroic attempt to rescue those on board the ill-fated Union Star. Using actual radio footage, eyewitness testimony and memories of bereaved family members, this film tells the story of that tragic night.

Originally shown in 2006 to mark the 25th anniversary of the disaster.

TUE 23:00 999 Special: The Great Storm of 1987 (m001x813)

Michael Buerk presents a programme looking back on the night

of the Great Storm of 16 October 1987, when winds of over 100 miles an hour ravaged the south and east of England and left 18 dead and many others injured.

TUE 23:50 Parkinson (m0013xz5)
[Repeat of broadcast at 23:00 on Saturday]

TUE 00:50 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m000lk7h)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

TUE 01:50 The Boleyns: A Scandalous Family (p09jgk30)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

TUE 02:50 The Zaks Affair: Anatomy of a Fake Collection (m001xf4)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 on Monday]

WEDNESDAY 13 MARCH 2024

WED 19:00 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m000lpvv)
Series 7

Berlin to Stuttgart

Michael Portillo embarks on a rail journey through Germany, steered by a Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide published in 1936. His unique window on Europe between the world wars takes him through a tumultuous period in German history, when the nation's first democracy and its vibrant culture of art, design and decadence were swept away by fascism, nationalism and the increasing likelihood of war.

In a vast stadium, Michael hears how new rail lines were constructed to transport crowds of spectators to the Nazi Olympic Games of 1936. Michael learns how a planned boycott by the United States and other European nations failed and how the success of a black American athlete undermined the Nazi ideology of Aryan superiority.

At the Museum of Modern Art in Berlin's Kreuzberg, Michael sees how a leading artist of the era, George Grosz, warned of the rise of fascism in a haunting self-portrait. Michael goes to the movies in Potsdam and discovers the success of the Babelsberg Studios, where directors such as Fritz Lang and stars such as Marlene Dietrich worked. He hears how production was taken over by the Nazis for propaganda.

In the Schöneberg district of the capital, Michael researches the decadent night scene of the 1920s, where sexual freedoms attracted gay and lesbian visitors from across the world. Michael sees how cabaret culture is being revived today - a burlesque performance is on the bill.

At the birthplace of German democracy in Weimar, Michael investigates the beginnings of Bauhaus design and visits the movement's first building - a single-family house which went beyond a statement of style to present a vision of how people would live in the 20th century.

Travelling with author Julia Boyd to Nuremberg, Michael discovers that during the 1930s, despite the First World War and the Third Reich, Britons and Americans loved Germany and German culture. Michael hears how one Briton above all was welcomed by Hitler to Germany - the Duke of Windsor, former King Edward VIII.

In the medieval Bavarian city of Nuremberg, Michael visits the monumental buildings and parade grounds, which were the stage for vast Nazi rallies to publicise the regime around the world and arouse popular support at home. Michael finishes in Stuttgart, where an ambitious engineering project is under way, which will integrate the city into a high-speed train route connecting Paris with Bratislava.

Michael bags a ride in a high-performance Porsche to the manufacturer's Stuttgart headquarters and discovers that in the 1930s, the founder designed an affordable car for mass production - the Beetle.

WED 20:00 Himalaya with Michael Palin (b0074qn6)
North by Northwest

Intrepid adventurer Michael Palin embarks on an epic journey. He travels through Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province, starting on the Khyber Pass and ending five miles from K2 on the Pakistan/China border. He passes through Darra, visits a street dentist in Peshawar, goes bull racing with a Pakistani aristocrat and is almost trampled to death, and finally crosses over the Lowari Pass into the buffer state of Chitral.

WED 21:00 Rise of the Nazis (p09jgld)
Dictators at War

The Home Front

Facing defeat on the Eastern Front, Hitler retreats, and his inner circle vies for power. The resistance gets a student voice, and an enemy within plots to kill Hitler.

WED 22:00 The Railway Station Man (p0c3zsnz)
Painter Helen Cuffe has fled to Donegal with her young son Jack after the killing of her husband in Northern Ireland. She lives in isolation until she meets a mysterious, disabled American, who is obsessed with restoring an abandoned railway station. Romance blossoms, but then a group of so-called freedom fighters decides to store arms in the railway station - and enlists the help of Helen's son.

WED 23:30 The Great Gatsby (m000yp9f)
Dramatisation of F Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel of doomed love, starring Mira Sorvino and Toby Stephens. In the volatile era of the twenties, flamboyant millionaire Jay Gatsby pursues the seductive Daisy, the love he lost while serving in the First World War.

WED 01:05 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m000lpvv)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

WED 02:05 999 Special: The Great Storm of 1987 (m001x8l3)
[Repeat of broadcast at 23:00 on Tuesday]

WED 02:55 Rise of the Nazis (p09jgld)
[Repeat of broadcast at 21:00 today]

THURSDAY 14 MARCH 2024

THU 19:00 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m000lwmr)
Series 7

Palermo to Mt Etna

Michael Portillo's 1936 Bradshaw's Guide brings him to the Italian 'treasure island' of Sicily, full of natural beauty and 'scenery of the greatest charm'. But the interwar guide book also tells Michael that the head of government in Italy is the fascist leader Signor Benito Mussolini. On a railway journey from the capital, Palermo, through the ancient town of Agrigento and the port of Siracusa, to Europe's largest volcano, Mount Etna, Michael explores Sicilian life under the dictatorship. Michael finds out how the dictator took on the mafia and asks whether it is true that under Mussolini, the trains ran on time.

In Palermo, Michael takes in the art and architecture of the futurists and feasts on a Sicilian speciality - spaghetti and sardines - in the city's Ballaro street market. In the Capo district, Michael learns how the island's distinctive puppets are made and is enchanted to see them in action.

Among the spectacular ancient Greek and Roman temples of Agrigento, Michael hears of the passionate ten-year search by a British archaeologist at the time of his guide for a long-lost ancient Greek theatre. The drama of the interwar period comes to life in front of Michael's eyes as he joins six characters in search of an author at the Teatro Pirandello.

Michael takes the helm to explore the port of Siracusa by boat before visiting a controversial monument, which depicts a dark chapter in Italian history. He concludes his Sicilian journey on the circular railway around Mount Etna, aboard the sleek, futurist-inspired train inaugurated by Mussolini in 1937 - La Littorina.

THU 20:00 Dan Cruickshank's Warsaw: Resurrecting History (b06r12fd)

Dan Cruickshank returns to his childhood home of Warsaw for the first time in almost 60 years. In a personal and moving film, he recalls his boyhood to explore the memories of the city and those of its people. No city in Europe suffered so much destruction in the Second World War, no city rose up so heroically from the ashes. The Nazis had razed Warsaw to the ground, but after the war the people fought hard to bring their city back from the dead in one of the greatest reconstruction jobs in history. As a boy, Cruickshank lived in the rebuilt old town and it inspired his love of architecture and made him the man he is today.

THU 21:00 Their Finest (m0008595)

1940, London, the Blitz. With the country's morale at stake, Catrin, an untried screenwriter from Ebbw Vale, and a makeshift cast and crew work under fire to make a film to lift the nation's spirits - and inspire America to join the war. Leading the cast is the self-absorbed actor Ambrose Hilliard, who is persuaded to coach the handsome young American hero who has been 'parachuted' into the acting profession - but that will only be when the script is produced.

Acclaimed period drama from BBC Films.

THU 22:50 Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom (m001x9j1)
Oscar-nominated Bhutanese drama. Disillusioned young teacher Ugyen dreams of moving to Australia to pursue a singing career but instead finds himself posted to the most remote school in the world - high in the Himalayan mountains.

In Dzongkha with English subtitles.

THU 00:35 Cruel Sea: The Penlee Lifeboat Disaster (b00794gz)
[Repeat of broadcast at 22:00 on Tuesday]

THU 01:35 Great Continental Railway Journeys (m000lwmr)
[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

THU 02:35 Himalaya with Michael Palin (b0074qn6)
[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 on Wednesday]

FRIDAY 15 MARCH 2024

FRI 19:00 Top of the Pops (m001x9f9)
Stewart Lee and Richard Herring present the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 10 October 1995 and featuring Wildchild, Smokie, Ash, 2 Unlimited, East 17, Queen, Eternal, Cher and Simply Red.

FRI 19:30 Top of the Pops (m001x9f1)
Simon Mayo presents the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 26 October 1995 and featuring The Lightning Seeds, Meat Loaf, The Human League, Everything but the Girl, Smashing Pumpkins, Diana King, UB40, Cher and Coolio featuring LV.

FRI 20:00 Top of the Pops (m000x8p7)
Simon Mayo presents the pop chart programme, first broadcast on 14 March 1991 and featuring Chesney Hawkes, Ride and Happy Mondays.

FRI 20:30 Top of the Pops (b01dprb4)
17/3/1977

Tony Blackburn introduces Berni Flint, Billy Ocean, Suzi Quatro, Showaddywaddy, Barclay James Harvest, Cliff Richard, Maxine Nightingale and Manhattan Transfer. Dance sequence by Legs & Co.

FRI 21:00 The Irish Rock Story: A Tale of Two Cities (b0555xv8)

Film telling the story of how rock music helped to change Ireland. The 40-year-old story of Irish rock and pop music is grounded in the very different musical traditions of the two main cities of the island, Belfast and Dublin.

This musical celebration charts the lives and careers of some of the biggest selling acts in Irish rock, punk and pop from Van Morrison and Thin Lizzy to The Undertones and U2. From the pioneers of the showbands touring in the late 50s through to the modern day, the film examines their lineage and connections and how the hardcore, rocking sound of Belfast merged with the more melodic, folksy Dublin tradition to form what we now recognise as Irish rock and pop.

The film explores where these bands and musicians came from and the influence the political, social and cultural environments of the day had on them and how the music influenced those environments.

With contributions from many of the heavyweights of Irish rock and pop, including U2, Sinead O'Connor and Bob Geldof, it follows their careers as they forged an international presence and looks at how they helped change the island along the way.

FRI 22:00 The Story of Microdisney: The Clock Comes Down the Stairs (m001x9fs)

In 1980, two Cork outsiders, Cathal Coughlan and Sean O'Hagan, met at a New Year's Eve party. Bonding over music, a friendship and songwriting partnership was ignited; the band

they formed, Microdisney, was one of the best bands of the 1980s that you've probably never heard. Mixing Sean's stunning melodic arrangements with Cathal's poetic, angry lyrics, they recorded three brilliant LPs, gained critical adulation and an obsessive cult following. But a hit single eluded them, as did radio play and LP sales. By 1988, frustrated by their lack of progress, the band crashed and burned, leaving a trail of acrimony and broken friendships.

This new film asks why the band failed to achieve the commercial success they deserved, but it also picks up the Microdisney story 30 years on, when, contrary to all expectations, they reformed for a sequence of sellout reunion gigs celebrating a new award for their seminal album, *The Clock Comes Down the Stairs*.

Charting the band's early days in Cork to the sellout reunion gigs, the film includes exclusive behind-the-scenes footage, vintage archive, heart-searching interviews and live performances.

The film has been a labour of love for producer/director Julie Perkins.

Says Julie: 'The reunion gigs were a dream come true for fans. And they came from far and wide to be there. For me as a filmmaker, it was a story that deserved to be told. And it's the story of two supremely talented individuals, whose songwriting puts them up there with Lennon and McCartney, Rogers and Hammerstein... I felt privileged to be able to tell.'

FRI 23:25 Folk Hibernia at the BBC (b0074tkd)

Celebrating the finest in Irish folk music with a compilation of performances taken from the BBC archives. Highlights include songs from The Clancy Brothers, The Chieftains, Christy Moore, The Pogues and Sharon Shannon.

FRI 00:25 TOTP2 (b0074820)

St Patrick's Day Special

Steve Wright introduces music from The Boomtown Rats, The Corrs, Enya, Shane McGowan and Johnny Depp, Stiff Little Fingers, Thin Lizzy, Sinead O'Connor and U2.

FRI 01:10 Top of the Pops (m000x8p7)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:00 today]

FRI 01:40 Top of the Pops (b01dprb4)

[Repeat of broadcast at 20:30 today]

FRI 02:10 Top of the Pops (m001x9f9)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:00 today]

FRI 02:40 Top of the Pops (m001x9f1)

[Repeat of broadcast at 19:30 today]

FRI 03:10 TOTP2 (b0074820)

[Repeat of broadcast at 00:25 today]