

YOUR NATIONAL
CULTURE GUIDE



NOW SHOWING

Zama (M)
Argentinian director Lucrecia Martel's new film, *Zama*, is set in 1790 in a little colonial backwater on the Amazon. The central character is Don Diego de Zama (Daniel Gimenez Cacho, pictured above), a magistrate representing Spanish justice who is conscious of the fact his appointment to this out-of-the-way place is a kind of humiliation. To Zama's frustration, the local governor constantly frustrates his requests and demands for a transfer, refusing to send the required letter to the king in Madrid, and when the hapless Zama is discovered to be writing a book — on government time — he's punished by being forced to move from his already primitive accommodation to more squalid premises on the outskirts of the community. He responds by joining a band of soldiers who are hunting down a legendary outlaw. As a protagonist, Zama is not exactly an easy figure to understand or warm to. Yet this handsome film, beautifully photographed by Portuguese cinematographer Rui Pócas, is more than just an esoteric exercise in exoticia. It's a stark vision of a corrupt society.

DAVID STRATTON ★★☆☆☆

Johnny English Strikes Again (PG)
Rowan Atkinson stars in *Johnny English Strikes Again*, the third film in the comic espionage series in which he is a combination of James Bond and Mr Bean. As the title suggests, this movie is about English coming in from the cold. We first see him teaching geography — and spy craft — at an English school. But when a cyber attack reveals the identity of every British spy, the government has to call agents out of retirement. The Prime Minister (Emma Thompson) is about to host a G20 summit. It is English who must save the world from the cyber terrorists. He is joined by his tech-savvy comrade cum manservant Bough (Ben Miller). The PM is unconvinced the empire can be rescued by Her Majesty's Secret Service. So she reaches out to a young Silicon Valley tech billionaire (Jake Lacy). This movie is directed by David Kerr and it's his first go at the series, though the scriptwriter, William Davies, has been there from the start. Kerr sensibly sticks more or less to the format. There are times when what is obvious is also what is needed, and this is one of them.

STEPHEN ROMEI ★★☆☆☆

QUEENSLAND

MUSIC

The Louis Armstrong Legacy
Jazz singer Herb Armstrong presents Louis's favourite songs accompanied by 16-piece band the Art Deco Dance Orchestra. *Home of the Arts, Paradise Showroom*, 135 Bundall Road, Surfers Paradise. Tomorrow, 7.30pm. Tickets: \$28-\$30. Bookings: (07) 5588 4000 or online. Duration: 2 hr 30 min, including interval.

VICTORIA

EXHIBITION

Mandela — My Life: The Official Exhibition
Culled from the archives of the Johannesburg-based Mandela Foundation, this exhibition includes documents and memorabilia, plus a suite of paintings by South African artist John Meyer depicting Mandela's life from childhood to world renown.

MIRIAM COSIC
Melbourne Museum. Touring Hall, 11 Nicholson St, Carlton. Daily, 10am-5pm. Tickets: \$17.90-\$32. Bookings: 13 11 02 or online. Until March 2019.

TASMANIA

MUSIC

The Joy of Mozart
Violinist Emma McGrath performs Mozart's Violin Concerto No 3. The program also includes Haydn's Symphony No 44, *Mourning*, Korngold's *Much Ado about Nothing* Suite and Brahms's Tragic Overture. *Federation Concert Hall*, 1 Davey St, Hobart. Friday, 7.30pm. Tickets: \$33-\$99. Bookings: 1800 001 190 or online.

NSW

STAGE

Leigh Sales: Any Ordinary Day
Walkley award-winner Leigh Sales discusses her book *Any Ordinary Day* with Annabel Crabb. Investigating how the brain manages grief and fear, Sales's book is a mix of scientific research and interviews with those who have faced extreme hardship. *Seymour Centre*, Corner of City Road and Cleveland Street, Chippendale. Today, 6.30pm. Tickets: \$30-\$35. Bookings: (02) 9351 7940 or online.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

STAGE

Faith Healer
Francis Hardy tours Ireland, Scotland and Wales with his wife, preaching his ability to cure the ill. Judy Davis directs this play, written by Brian Friel, which explores themes of nostalgia and faith. *Adelaide Festival Centre*, Space Theatre, King William Street. Tonight, 6.30pm. Tickets: \$30-\$84. Bookings: 131 246 or online. Until October 13. Duration: 1hr 40min.



NORTHERN
TERRITORY

STAGE

Lisa Wilkinson
Journalist and television presenter Lisa Wilkinson (above) will step on stage at the Darwin Entertainment Centre. Moving from print media to radio and television, Wilkinson will discuss stories from her media career. *Darwin Entertainment Centre*, The Playhouse, 93 Mitchell Street, Darwin City. Today, 5.30pm. Tickets: \$20. Bookings: (08) 8980 3333 or online.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

EXHIBITION

2018 Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award
The 43rd annual Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award presents a selection of artists' books and prints from emerging and established Australian artists. *Fremantle Arts Centre*, 1 Finnerty St, Fremantle. Daily, 10am-4pm. Free entry. Inquiries: (08) 9432 9555 or online. Until November 4.

Edited by Sophia Morrison
Full reviews of new films will appear in *The Weekend Australian* on Saturday

Send event information to listsings@theaustralian.com.au

ARTS



Matt Johnson
returns with the
definite article

Matt Johnson has put the The back on the road, playing at such prestigious venues as the Royal Albert Hall, below, and tonight at the Sydney Opera House

HELEN EDWARDS

The The's frontman hopes Australian audiences will sing along and dance

JANE CORNWELL



CHRISTIE GOODWIN

'People need to
put down their
phones and
galvanise'

MATT JOHNSON

a radio ban. There were long-form videos involving death-defying stunts and recording sessions fuelled by sleeplessness and magic mushroom tea. When Johnson's younger brother Eugene died suddenly in 1989, aged 24, midway through the band's world tour, then his mother not long after, Johnson quit. "Everything felt irrelevant," he's said.

Johnson was always an anti-pop star. Recruiting mates such as ex-Smiths guitarist Johnny Marr to work on 1992's *Dusk* helped. But the gaps between releases — 1995's *Hanky Panky*, a leftfield take on Hank Williams's back cata-

logue; 2000's acclaimed *Naked Sleep* — kept coming. For a long while he felt stuck. Not for nothing is last year's documentary about Johnson titled *The Inertia Variations*, after a work by English poet John Tottenham. Johnson read the poem from the Royal Albert Hall stage: "You would think by now people would know better than to ask me what I have been doing with my time / And you would think by now I would have come up with any answer that would silence them."

A new authorised biography details the emptiness that walloped him once he had finished pouring himself into recording sessions, after travelling the world to make authentic, soul-baring art for his fans. He tells me how he had sat at home watching a television screening of *Infected*, the feature-length film he had spent three years creating, issuing it

alongside the eponymous album. He waited for the phone to ring. It didn't. "Eventually I understood that the joy comes in the creation," he says with a shrug.

"So going forward to 2018 and being in this band ... I'm older. We're having a laugh. I'm enjoying the moment."

Johnson only ever wanted to work in music. The third of four sons born to publicans in Stratford, east London, his earliest musical memories include the Beatles wallpaper in his shared bedroom and muffled sounds of bands playing in the pub — The Two Puddings — below. Not just any bands: The Two Puddings was one of the best live music venues in the East End and Johnson's Uncle Kenny was one of London's top live music promoters.

"The Small Faces, the Kinks, before they were famous ... We could hear them if we sat on the stairs. When I was 12 I learned to play boogie woogie on the pub's old Joanna" — Cockney rhyming slang, he adds with a twinkle, for upright piano — "then picked up a guitar at 14 and formed my first band."

Aged 15 he left school, which he hardly went to anyway, and got a job in a recording studio in edgy, characterful Soho. Aged 17 he put an ad in the hallowed *New Musical Express*, a shout-out for musicians influenced by the Residents, Syd Barrett, Throbbing Gristle and Velvet Underground. The The began as an electronic duo: "I paid my dues playing various venues and kept songwriting; my father was a big influence in my self-education. He was very well read. Sar-

tre. Trotsky. Graham Greene. George Orwell was his favourite."

He leaps up and fetches a book titled *Fables from The Two Puddings*, filled with stories and photos of uncles and aunts and immediate family including his elder brother Andrew, whose death in 2016 prompted Johnson to revive The The; and his father Eddie, who died earlier this year, aged 86, just as the band was about to play Stockholm. "Dad would have wanted me to continue," says Johnson, whose new song about death, *We Can't Stop What's Coming*, took on added poignancy; it will feature on a new studio album due for release next year.

Having returned, Johnson's muse is staying faithful. He has set up a record label, broadcasts on his own Radio Cineola, has a publishing company called 51st State Press and has channelled his flair for mixed-media into a series of lovingly crafted CD/book releases. A boxed set features the film *Tony* by his younger brother Gerard, for which Johnson did the soundtrack; and *Moonbug*, a documentary on the Apollo astronauts with music by The The. I ask who buys them and he flashes a grin. "Asian housewives," he quips. "You'd be surprised."

There are more projects to come, he says. But for now, between concern for our overheating planet and a longstanding need to talk about gentrification, globalisation, extremism, it is The The, and Australia, that are on his mind. "I hope they'll sing along and dance." A smile. "In fact, I tell people they have to sing along. If I forget the words I just have to read their lips."

The The performs at the Sydney Opera House today and tomorrow, and at the Melbourne Festival on Thursday and Friday.

No contest in the saviour stakes

Protecting our way
of life comes easily
to the original 007

BEN HOYLE

There are critics who regard the 1998 film *The Avengers* as a crime against cinema, if not humanity itself.

But while much of the ridicule stems from the appearance of Sir Sean Connery as a mad-scientist villain dressed in a teddy-bear costume, the actor is still in credit.

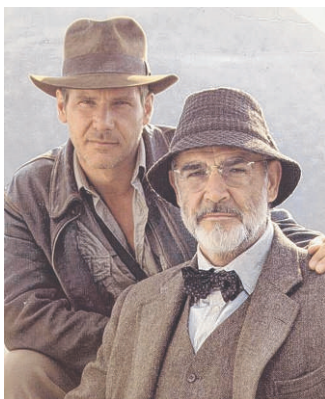
Connery has saved the planet in his roles more times than any other actor, researchers say. The former Edinburgh body-builder and milkman never bothered to develop an Irish accent for his Oscar-winning performance as an Irish-American cop in *The Untouchables*. But frankly, when you've thwarted 13 bids to subvert the world order as we know it in films spread across four decades, and been named the Greatest Living Scot into the bargain, why would you? Connery began rescuing humanity from doom and destruction in 1962 with his



Sean Connery as James Bond in *Goldfinger*, left, and with Harrison Ford in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*

breakthrough role as James Bond in *Dr No*, the first film adapted from Ian Fleming's novels.

He prevents the mysterious Julius No, a rogue atomic scientist, from using a nuclear-powered radio beam to override US missile launching systems and hold the world to ransom. Connery provided a similar service as 007 in six more Bond films. Researchers from Movies4Men, the action film channel, say his 13 rescue acts put him three clear of Bruce Willis and four ahead of



Keanu Reeves. Harrison Ford and Will Smith came fourth and fifth.

Milla Jovovich was the most deadly actress, with 1296 kills in the *Resident Evil* series — though most of them were zombies. Other actors in the top five are Jet Li, Dolph Lundgren, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Chow Yun-fat. To be considered in the killer category, actors must have received combat and weapons training.

THE TIMES

Let's stop laughing
and start voting, says
Armando Iannucci

DAVID SANDERSON

One of Britain's leading satirists has declared himself redundant. Armando Iannucci says the rise of Donald Trump and other populist politicians who regard themselves as entertainers means that he now advocates voting instead.

"Trump is a self-basting satirist," Iannucci says. "Just read him and you have found the joke about him. It comes out in what he says, which leaves people like me slightly redundant other than just to point it out."

Iannucci, 54, creator of television shows and films such as *The Thick of It* and *The Death of Stalin*, told the Cliveden Literary Festival in Britain that politics has "moved beyond satire".

"The best, most powerful, response against people like them is to vote against them, rather than just to make jokes," he says.

"I worry that to make jokes you kind of accept them on a par with



Jason Isaac, centre, in Iannucci's *The Death of Stalin*

Thatcher and Major and Blair and I think we have gone beyond that. We have gone into a world where these people think they are untouchable and the only way to touch them is by voting them out, so I would far rather concentrate on that."

Iannucci says he is not making "much stuff about the present day", with his latest project being an adaptation of Dickens's *David Copperfield*.

Despite his scathing portrayal of politicians in *The Thick of It* and the HBO series *Veep*, Iannucci says that none of those he satirised were "criminals; they are

fundamentally OK as people". He sympathised with their predicament and reveals that Clement Attlee, Tony Blair and Barack Obama were three figures that he respected.

While not naming others beyond Trump, Iannucci says that the "current brand are their own entertainers". "That is how Trump sees himself, he is obsessed with figures and ratings. He is obsessed with a measurable popularity, so to maintain and achieve that popularity he has to do something very day to make a headline," he says.

THE TIMES