

MUSIC

with Helen Clarke



Cat Power
Dark End of the Street
Matador
EP
December 8
★★★★☆

THE leftovers from the recording session that gave us Chan Marshall's second album of covers, *Jukebox*, make up her latest EP and as usual, the most predictable thing about the record are her unpredictable song choices.

She shuns her idols' popular hits, instead choosing to delve deeper into their back catalogue.

With this, *Jukebox* and her earlier tribute album *The Greatest*, she shows off her talent for reworking other people's songs and making them her own.

Her take on *Ye Auld Triangle* by The Pogues is completely unrecognisable and her versions of *I've Been Loving You Too Long* by Otis Redding and Sandy Denny's *Who Knows Where the Time Goes* are particularly sultry.

A bluesy soundtrack to the long winter nights, it seals her transformation from quirky indie kid to full-on soul better.



James Morrison and Nelly Furtado
Broken Strings
Single
Polydor
December 8
★★★★☆

JAMES MORRISON serves up another slice of housewife-friendly soft rock, this time with the promise of Nelly Furtado to keep us awake through the first minute and a half.

She should have been the perfect addition to inject some life into his throaty, raspy musings – think Kylie and Nick Cave – but even her usually fiery performance has been dragged through the soft focus blender and *Broken Strings* is as mind numbing as the rest of Morrison's catalogue. It sounds like an adult *High School Musical* duet or a chick flick montage soundtrack – sugary sweet and completely forgettable.



WhiskyCats
WhiskyCats Medical
Album
December 8
★★★★☆

PROOF that you can have a career as an unsigned band, The WhiskyCats are releasing their debut album on their own label, despite their recent brush with fame.

Hugely popular up north, they were the first band to sell out Manchester's Academy 2 and to headline the massive Academy 1.

There was outrage when they lost out on a place in the final of T4's *Orange Unsigned – The X-Factor* for cool kids – because the judges didn't think they'd got mass appeal. They set out to prove them wrong in Johnny Marr's home studio.

A gutsy, part gypsy-punk, part jazz-pop blast of fresh air, it's music to send toddlers and cidered up students into a frenzy. But underneath the booze-fuelled romp is a knowing, indie sentiment that keeps it all together – an air of The Divine Comedy's Neil Hannon. Clever stuff.

Are you loving, or hating, an album or single? Let us know by logging on to www.londoninformer.co.uk/sendstory

informer review

Mirror Magic Market Tales

RIVERSIDE STUDIOS



THREE men, aided by a magic mirror of consequence, are on a quest for happiness. Meet them all at the marketplace where you can sample their homemade jam and gingerbread. They need your help to forge a fairy tale ending!

● *Mirror Magic Market Tales*, by Chantal Schaul, is at the Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, Hammersmith from Tuesday, December 9, until Sunday, January 4. Suitable for all ages. £10 until

Friday, Dec 12, £14/10 after. Tue-Sun 7.30pm, Sat and Sun mats 1pm. Suitable for eight years and up. Call 020 8237 1111. See www.riversidestudios.co.uk

Snow White and the Seven Drunks



PICTURE BY TYRONNE LEBON

THE TABERNACLE

PORTOBELLO Panto celebrates its 20th anniversary! Made famous by the likes of Stephen Fry, Ruby Wax and Keith Allen, the celebfest has been taken over by a new generation. Starring Jaime Winstone, Alfie Allen, Daisy Lowe and *The Wire*'s Dominic West, this year expect humour for young and old as the

seven self-slandering drunks lovingly mock the darker sides of their lifestyles.

● *Snow White and The Seven Drunks* is at The Tabernacle, Powis Square, behind Westbourne Park Road, Notting Hill from December 16-20. Suitable for all ages. Price and time TBC, call Rough Trade on 020 7229 8541 or email ruby@portobellopanto.co.uk

William's Monster

CHELSEA THEATRE



FROM the creators of *The Gruffalo*, comes a tale of trouble in middle of the night. William is a young boy with a lot of imagination. Staying with grumpy Grandpa for the first time, monstrous music is coming out of the darkness. How will William ever manage to get to sleep?

● *William's Monster*, by Tall Stories is at the Chelsea Theatre, World's End Place, King's Road, until

December 28. £7, buy 10 get one free. 10.30am and 1.30pm, runs for 55 mins. Suitable for up to seven years. Call 020 7352 1967. See www.chelseatheatre.org.uk

Festive CHEER!

WHO'S LUCKIER THIS CHRISTMAS? THE KIDS WHO GET TAKEN TO THE SHOWS, OR THE PARENTS WHO GET TO TAKE THEM? PUNY PANTOS DON'T CUT THE CUSTARD ANYMORE, SO HERE'S A LOOK AT LONDON'S BEST, BY CHRISTIAN MCLAUGHLIN

Cinderella, and Brilliant

THE LYRIC

IT'S WINTER. The Queen has declared that there will be a glittering festival of music, magic and dancing so that her son might find a suitable bride. Everyone of note is invited. Or almost everyone... Cinderella's arctic wonderland (main picture) will feature original music by Norway's Terje Isungset and an ice themed ball at the Kings Palace during the interval.

For younger audiences, the moon's come down to play! Superb lighting will give lift-off for an unforgettable lunar landing in *Brilliant* (inset).

● *Cinderella*, by Ben Power and Melly Still, is at the Lyric Theatre, Lyric Square, Hammersmith, until January 3. £10-27. Times vary. 10am, 1.30pm, 2pm, 7pm. Suitable for seven years and up. *Brilliant*, by Fevered Sleep runs until December 27. £8/6 children. Family ticket 4 for £25. Suitable for three-six years. Call 0871 22 117 22. See www.lyric.co.uk



The Snowman

PEACOCK THEATRE

THE story of a young boy's adventures when his snowman comes to life on Christmas Eve. Featuring penguins, reindeer, the snow princess and Father Christmas himself! With *Walking in the Air* played live by a full orchestra.

● *The Snowman*, by Raymond Briggs and performed by the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, is at the Peacock Theatre until January 11. £12-30. Times vary, 11am, 2.30pm and 7pm. Suitable for two years and up. Call 0844 412 4322. See www.sadlerswells.com



Amazonia

YOUNG VIC

CIRQUE du Soleil designer Gringo Cardia will combine the best of British and Brazilian talent to transform the Young Vic into an enchanted rainforest! Celebrating the life of environmentalist Chico Mendes, who was assassinated 20 years ago while trying to save the rainforest. Original Brazilian music will be composed and performed by Adriano Adewal and more.

● *Amazonia*, by Paul Heritage and Colin Teevan, is at the Young Vic, The Cut, Waterloo, until January 24. £10-22.50. Times vary. Suitable for seven years and up. Call 020 7922 2922. See www.youngvic.org



PICTURE BY ELLIE KURTZ

The Gruffalo

DUCHESS THEATRE

SOME see the friendly mouse as a welcome guest, but other, not so friendly monsters see him as dinner! Not so scary, funny and with great songs this adaptation of Alex Scheffler's book is a winner.

● *The Gruffalo*, by Tall Stories, is at the Duchess Theatre, Catherine Street, Covent Garden, until January 4. £11.50-14.50. Sat 10.30am and noon, Sun 11am and 1.30pm, Tue-Fri 11am. Suitable three years and up. Call 0870 890 1103.

