

THE first date on the tour is tomorrow in Rhyl. I've been rehearsing in the theatre this week. I could go on stage tonight I'm that excited. I can't wait.

It's like two separate shows. You get the pop stuff first with a bit of the X Factor stuff that takes you on the journey before Popstar To Operastar. Then the mood changes and you get the classical stuff.

Tonight I'll still be rehearsing like crazy for that first show and there'll be no time for any playtime. It's hard work because I want that first show to be perfect.

If I wanted to have some time off tomorrow before the show I probably could but I don't want it because I want to polish everything up and make sure it's totally perfect.

There'll be plenty of time for that after.

On Sunday I'll be travelling to the next show in Margate.

Although I'm busy this week rehearsing every day from 9am to 6pm, it's been the first week in a long time where I've had time to myself in the evening. So back at the hotel I've been able to catch **Coronation Street** and **EastEnders**. I haven't seen them for ages.

I like watching **Friends** and **Will & Grace** but I love **Brothers and Sisters**.

I've got the box sets and I watch them on my laptop.

I went to see **Tintin** (bottom right) last week at the cinema. It's really good. Really funny. I tend to go when I'm back home in South Shields where people are used to me being around so it's not too bad with them wanting autographs and photos. I throw a hoodoo on and sneak in when the lights have gone down.

I love living up there. I've got my own place now. I bought it after the X Factor.

I don't get home as much

## My perfect weekend Joe McElderry

**The X Factor and Popstar to Operastar winner will be opening his debut UK tour this weekend**



as I'd like to but even if it's only for a couple of days, it's worth it.

I've managed for the past two years commuting to London and it's not been a problem so I don't think I need to move there.

I'm not a cook. Not in the slightest. Me mam or

friends come round and make me dinner. Or if I do it myself it'll be scrambled egg and beans. I like scrambled egg and mushrooms for breakfast. I tend to be out for the rest of the day so I'll grab a salad or soup wherever I am. I try and eat healthy but I'm in different places every day pretty much.

I sing at least one song every day so the voice is always in good shape. It's a muscle, so it's like going to the gym. If I don't sing for a week it takes a couple of days to warm my voice up.

I like running to keep fit. I'll run three or four times a week.

I don't read books. I find it really hard. The only time I'd read one is in bed and I'd fall asleep straight away.

I have probably the weirdest music taste ever. Especially since doing Popstar To Operastar. It's **classical, pop, country music, Beyonce, Rihanna...** all sorts. I went to see Rihanna (far left) two weeks ago. That was a really good show.

I went to see **Live At The Apollo** as well recently, which is the (BBC) comedy thing. They did pick on me but in a nice way. I was dreading it but it wasn't horrible. It was **Alan Carr** and **Micky Flanagan**.

If I had a weekend to myself and I wasn't working I'd chill out with friends and family, go to the pictures, go out for food, go for a run... I'd probably have a house party.

I was in **Nottingham** for the X Factor tour and we were there for two nights so I had time to have a look around.

We went to the dungeon or is it the old jail? Yes, the **Galleries of Justice**. They opened it for us after the first show and we had a look around there. It's quite spooky and very strange.

**Joe McElderry is at the Royal Concert Hall on Thursday, from 7.30pm. Tickets are £27.50 and £29.50, available from the venue, by calling 0115 989 5555 or via www.trch.co.uk**

Simon Wilson



## CDs



### The Wanted: Battleground

Number one single Glad You Came opens the album in rousing fashion, but with three top five singles, including Lightning and Gold Forever, on the record, the group's work is partly done. I'll Be Your Strength is

an emotional ballad before launching into dance beats, while The Weekend is a full-on electro-pop-dance tune. With Battleground, The Wanted show there is no stopping them.

★★★★  
Shereen Low

### Knights-Gates Duo: Flights Of Fancy

His plaintive oboe gracing music both established and new, Andrew Knights plays Poulenc's memorable Sonata and Philip Gates's well-crafted memorial to a jazz pianist. Knights's cor anglais and sweet oboe d'amore are featured in Duparc song transcriptions and evocative pieces by Charles Koechlin. Gates rounds off an appealing Melodist CD with solo piano items from Erik Satie.



★★★★  
Peter Palmer



### Steve Hicks & Lynn Goulbourn: Hicks and Goulbourn

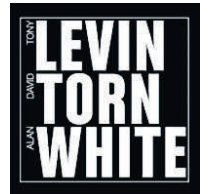
Hicks and Goulbourn are well established on the local folk scene. This is an excellent vehicle for Steve's guitar skills and Lynn's vocals. If we are looking for

highspots, the musically jokey Stairway To Mozart has to be a contender and It Ain't Necessarily So explores a vast vocal range. In the wake of the demise of Bret Jansch it is endearing to see Pentangle's Light Flight here.

★★★★  
Dave Sutherland

### Tony Levin, David Torn, Alan White: Levin Torn White

A rocking combination of renowned bassist Levin (best known for his work with Peter Gabriel and King Crimson), experimental guitar "texturalist" Torn and Yes drummer White, this is a remarkably entertaining mix of powerful instrumental art-rock riffs and grooves. White in particular sounds liberated and producer Scott Schorr keeps it all ultra-grisp and disciplined.

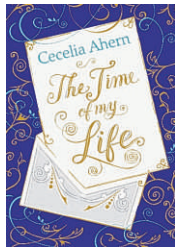


★★★★  
Sean Hewitt

## Books PS I Love You author pens another hit

### The Time Of My Life, Cecelia Ahern, hardback, £16.99

LUCY Silchester has trapped herself in a cocoon of lies to protect her broken heart. While this intelligent MBA graduate can speak five languages, she is short of talent when it comes to speaking the truth. The 29-year-old is on the verge of alienating her family and friends – until an appointment with Life shakes her into reality. The author of P.S. I Love You proves her credentials once again, with a novel that is enchanting, poignant and inspiring.



★★★  
Nilima Dey Sarker

### The Best Of Me by Nicholas Sparks, hardback, £19.99

AFTER six successful film adaptations, the number one New York Times best-seller delivers again. It's set in familiar territory in a small North Carolina town, where high school sweethearts, Dawson and Amanda are forced apart. 25 years on and they are leading very different lives. Back home to attend a funeral, they are suddenly confronted by their lost love and over a weekend make a life-changing decision. Emotional and gripping.



★★★★  
Laura Temple

### 666 Charing Cross Road, Paul Magrs, paperback, £13.99

In New York, a strange undead woman – the Scottish Bride Bessie – is unearthed in a Manhattan basement. Museum worker Shelley uses the new discovery as the centrepiece of her new display, much to the apprehension of her aunt Liza. However, the arrival of a book of spells sets off a disastrous chain of events – as Bessie is brought to life, Shelley's boyfriend Daniel develops a very different appetite, and a new breed of vampires infests New York, and threatens London too.



★★★★  
Emma Emeringham

### Top ten hardbacks

- 1 **Snuff: A Discworld Novel** Terry Pratchett
- 2 **The Magic Of Reality** Richard Dawkins
- 3 **The Sense Of An Ending** Julian Barnes
- 4 **Home Cooking Made Easy** Lorraine Pascale
- 5 **1Q84: Book One And Book Two** Haruki Murakami
- 6 **The Faithless** Martina Cole
- 7 **The Great British Bake Off** Linda Collister
- 8 **The Affair** Lee Child
- 9 **The Impossible Dead** Ian Rankin
- 10 **Heroes Of Olympus: The Son Of Neptune** Rick Riordan

## DVDs Roar of approval as Disney's epic masterpiece returns

**The Lion King (U)** ELDERLY lion Scar (voiced by Jeremy Irons) plots to usurp his brother, the majestic King Mufasa (James Earl Jones) and kill him and newborn cub Simba (Jonathan Taylor Thomas). Mufasa dies saving his son who, overwhelmed by guilt, flees his homeland and befriends the eccentric double-act of neurotic meerkat Timon (Nathan Lane) and flatulent warthog Pumbaa (Ernie Sabella). Years later, the now full-grown Simba (Matthew Broderick) chances upon his former sweetheart Nala (Moirá Kelly), who tells of Scar's despotic reign. An unmissable roar from the past that returns to DVD and struts on to Blu-ray for the first time. A potent blend of comedy and tragedy in 3D.



★★★★★

**Beautiful Lies (12)** PIERRE Salvadori's summer-time romance revolves around a series of coincidences and misunderstandings that gradually snowball out of control. Handyman Jean (Sami Bouajila) is madly in love with his employer, elfin hairdresser Emilie (Audrey Tautou). So he pens an anonymous love note, which she promptly screws up and bins. Then Emilie has a brainwave – she can send the billet doux to her mother Maddy (Nathalie Baye), who has been depressed since the breakdown of her marriage. Sure enough, the possibility of a secret lover shakes Maddy out of her fug and she happens upon the truth: that Jean is the author. Except, of course, she wasn't the intended recipient.



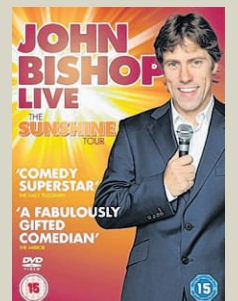
★★★★

**Flying Monsters With David Attenborough (E)** FOR generations Sir David Attenborough has been the warm and welcoming voice introducing us to some of the most spectacular sights of the natural world. In this new film, the leading naturalist works closely with scientists to better understand pterosaurs, the flying dinosaurs with wingspans of up to 40 feet, which soared over the Earth more than 220 million years ago. Aided by cutting-edge digital effects and 3D technology on the Blu-ray edition, he brings the fascinating story of these giant flying monsters and their prehistoric world to life, travelling to stunning locations including New Mexico and southern France.



★★★★★

**John Bishop Live: The Sunshine Tour (15)** THE Liverpool stand-up made history when his first DVD, John Bishop Live – The Elvis Has Left The Building Tour, became the fastest selling stand-up debut in the UK. His follow-up concert DVD was filmed live during his tour which included three shows at the Capital FM Arena. His comedy is a mix of the observational and autobiographical, largely based on the frustrations of being a middle-aged father of three. "When you're in your 40s you can't say to women the things you used to when you were in your 20s for fear of being branded a pervert," he says, to guffaws of recognition.



★★★★★  
Damon Smith