

Must See Theatre this March

With the World Premiere of Wild Rose, a new stage version of James Robertson's novel The Testament of Gideon Mack, David Hayman in Death of A Salesman and an encounter with Nessie, March brings a particularly Scottish flavour to Edinburgh stages.

Yee ha! What is it about Glasgow and country western music? The city seems to have an affinity with Nashville that Edinburgh doesn't – I'm sure more than one Taggart found there'd been a murder at a line-dancing club or some such. And so, March's Must See productions start at the Royal Lyceum with Wild Rose, A New Musical (6 March-19 April), in which that inexplicable relationship is once again explored. Based on the film of the same name written by Nicole Taylor and directed by Tom Harper, the piece tells the story of Rose-Lynn. The only thing that has ever made sense in her life is country music.



Fresh out of jail for past mistakes and bursting with raw talent, charisma and cheek, the free-spirited, want to be singer dreams of escaping Glasgow to make it in Nashville. Marion, her mother, has other ideas, however, and insists she settle down, ditch the fantasy, and focus on raising her two young kids. Rose-Lynn reluctantly agrees, taking a cleaning job where she finds an unlikely champion in her new boss, Susannah, who helps bring her dream closer than ever. Now Rose-Lynn must decide if risking everything will really pave the road to Nashville.

Described as an uplifting, heart-warming musical about motherhood, dreams, finding your three chords and the truth, Wild Rose features the songs of country western legends such as Dolly Parton, Carrie Underwood, Wynonna Judd, Chris Stapleton, Caitlyn Smith, The Chicks, and Patty Griffin, alongside the film's award-winning original song Glasgow (No Place Like Home).

The production, which has already seen its run extended, comes with a warning of strong language, making it suitable for ages

14+.

Running time 2 hours 30 minutes, including interval.
Tickets £25-£45 <https://lyceum.org.uk/events/wild-rose#dates-and-times>



Later this week, at the Festival Theatre, David Hayman makes a welcome and somewhat rare return to the Edinburgh stage in Arthur Miller's Pulitzer Prize-winning classic, *Death Of A Salesman* (19-22 March).

Considered by many to be one of the greatest plays of the twentieth century, Miller's timeless tale takes audiences on a thrilling journey through the final 24 hours of 63-year-old travelling salesman Willy Loman's life. Filled with his memories, dreams, and struggles, it's a study of one man's loss of identity and inability to change, exploring the pressure a father's expectations on his son, facing the realities of a world in which the 'American' dream is unravelling, leaving just betrayal, and abandonment. Joining Hayman in the cast are Beth Marshall as Linda, Daniel Cahill as Biff, Michael Wallace as Happy, Benny Young as

Charley, Gavin John Wright as Bernard, Simon Donaldson as Howard Wagner, Charlene Boyd as Woman in Boston, Stewart Ennis as Ben, Fay Guiffo as Miss Forsythe, Bailey Newsome as Stanley and Gillian Massey who doubles as Jenny and Letta.

Running time TBC *Tickets*
£22.50-£27.50 <https://www.capitaltheatres.com/whats-on/all-shows/death-of-a-salesman/2424#tickets>

Hot on the heels of Willy Loman, and perhaps aptly, it's the turn of Ghost Stories (26-29 March) to tour to the Nicolson Street theatre. Now, ghostly tales are nothing new to the stage. From

Noel Coward's Blithe Spirit to Danny Robins' 2:22 A Ghost Story, Arnold Ridley's The Ghost Train to Susan Hill's The Woman In Black, there's nothing like a spooky tale to send shivers down the spine on a cold winter's night... but there's nothing quite as scary as Andy Nyman and Jeremy Dyson's Ghost Stories.

Now more spine-tingling and fantastically terrifying than ever, the West End smash hit is set in a world where the ultimate love-letter to horror is imagined live on stage. When Professor Goodman, arch-sceptic out to debunk the paranormal, embarks on an investigation of three apparent hauntings – as recounted by a night-watchman, a teenage boy, and a businessman awaiting his first child – Goodman finds himself at the outer limits of rationality, and fast running out of explanations. A immersive and electrifying encounter, Ghost Stories is one of London's best reviewed plays of all time and guaranteed to have you on the edge of your seat. Dare you book to see it?

Running time 1 hour 30 minutes. *Tickets*
£22.50-£46.50 <https://www.capitaltheatres.com/whats-on/all-shows/ghost-stories/2376#tickets>

From ghosts to mythical creatures now, but while Nessie (28

March-5 April) might be about Scotland's Loch Ness monster, there's nothing scary about this play for all the family at The Studio, behind the Festival Theatre.

Suitable for ages 8+, Shonagh Murray's Nessie has been hailed as a captivating Scottish musical celebrating bravery, friendship and courage. On the scenic banks of Loch Ness lies the town of Bruachness, a place steeped in mystery and folklore, where the local residents live in cautious awe of the legendary Loch Ness Monster, believed to bring misfortune to those who glimpse it. Tales abound of torn fishing nets, capsized boats, and a haunting fog that marks the Monster's presence. But everything changes when an 11-year-old budding biologist named Mara encounters the Monster – who prefers to be called Nessa, thank you very much – and survives to tell the tale.

As news of Nessa spreads, Bruachness is swept into a whirlwind of Monster Mania. Tourists flock to the town, eager to catch a glimpse of the fabled creature. Amidst the growing frenzy, a mysterious mist descends, and a sinister plot unfolds at the local hydro plant. It's up to Mara, Nessa, and their aquatic friends to safeguard the loch and its inhabitants. Along the way, they might even uncover the secret of Nessa's origins.

Running time TBA. *Tickets*
£18.50 <https://www.capitaltheatres.com/whats-on/all-shows/nessie/2415#tickets>



Finally, if you're heading to London for a theatre break, make sure Tom Hiddleston and Hayley Atwell in William Shakespeare's romantic comedy, *Much Ado About Nothing* (10 February – Saturday 5 April) are on your schedule of shows to see. Hiddleston is Benedick and Atwell is Beatrice in director Jamie Lloyd's production of the Bard's savagely funny and beautifully tender battle of wits.

If all theatre is a play on words, none can be more so than *Much Ado About Nothing*, the title referencing the secrets and trickery that are the foundations of the comedy, intrigue, and action that unfold in the play believed to have been written between 1598 and 1599. Set in Messina, it centres on the relationships of two pairs of sweethearts; the first, Claudio and Hero, the second, Claudio's friend Benedick and Hero's cousin Beatrice. The wit and banter of the latter pair provide much of the humour.

After his acclaimed turn as Caliban, opposite Sigourney Weaver's Prospero in Lloyd's recent take on *The Tempest*, it's great to see Forbes Masson back at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, this time as Leonato, where he is joined by Mara Huf, Phillip Olagoke, Mason Alexander Park, James Phoon and Tim Steed, Mika Onyx Johnson and Gerald Kyd.

I've always believed that theatre has to be accessible to everyone, so it's good to see the Jamie Lloyd Company has 25,000 tickets at £25 each across their Shakespeare Season at the Theatre Royal, exclusively ear-marked for under 30s, key workers and those receiving government benefits. Nice one, Jamie.

Running *time* *TBA.* *Tickets*
£25 -
£345 <https://ticketing.lwtheatres.co.uk/event/20640/?date=2025-02>

Until April, happy theatre-going and remember, check out all my reviews at MustSeeTheatre.com -my Edinburgh stage reviews are also accessible via theedinburghreporter.co.uk

Bests, Liam