



Side by side for the first time in three centuries

By David Melsome

Two paintings depicting the same subject and both known as The Guitar Player – one signed by the great 17th-century master Johannes Vermeer and the other whose origins remain a mystery – are on display side-by-side for the first time in more than 300 years at Kenwood House in Hampstead.



Double vision: A visitor compares the two versions of *The Guitar Player* on display at Kenwood House. Photo English Heritage

On loan from the John G. Johnson Collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, US, the mystery painting joins the original Vermeer masterpiece at the English Heritage property, marking the 350th

anniversary of Vermeer's death in 1675.

The *Guitar Player* (1672) is one of only 37 known paintings by Vermeer, an artist who specialised in depicting everyday

life in domestic interiors. In the painting, a young woman looks up while playing her guitar as the strings continue to vibrate.

Double Vision: Vermeer at Kenwood runs until 11 January 2026.

Review: Opera Cocktail

Artsdepot, North Finchley

By Jessica Holt

Opera Cocktail, staged at Artsdepot, offered a refreshing and accessible take on the world of opera. Designed as a showcase of beloved arias, duets, and ensembles, this production aimed to enchant seasoned opera lovers and those new to the genre.



Open aria: Love and longing were all part of *Opera Cocktail* at Artsdepot

The evening unfolded as a series of musical 'cocktails', blending pieces from well-known operas with a dash of informal commentary and theatrical flair.

From the outset, the OperaUpClose performers exuded a sense of warmth and camaraderie, inviting the audience into the heart of the piece. The singers, all with impressive vocal credentials, navigated the repertoire with technical

assurance and expressive artistry. The direction was deft, balancing the grandeur of operatic tradition with moments of intimacy and humour. The staging around a picnic scene was simple but effective, making clever use of lighting and minimal props to evoke a variety of moods and settings.

Blended voices

Opera Cocktail's selection ranged from the comic brilliance of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* to the poignant passion of Puccini's *La Bohème*. Particularly memorable was the ensemble rendition of *Bella figlia dell'amore* from Verdi's *Rigoletto*, where the singers' voices blended beautifully. Congratulations to the cast Elinor Jane Moran (soprano), Brenton Spiteri (tenor), Felicity Buckland (mezzo) and Hannah

Shilvock on clarinet.

One of the production's strengths lay in its engagement with the audience. Performers occasionally broke the fourth wall, offering context or anecdotes that made each aria more accessible. This approach demystified opera, fostering a sense of inclusivity and breaking down barriers that can sometimes make the genre feel intimidating.

Artsdepot proved an ideal venue for *Opera Cocktail*, with its welcoming atmosphere and excellent acoustics. The intimate space allowed for a strong connection between performers and audience, enhancing the immediacy of the music and drama. The production's informal tone suited the venue's community ethos, creating a relaxed yet vibrant environment.

What's on at the Phoenix in October

By Kathryn Smith, executive director

A huge thank you to everyone for your continued support of the Phoenix Cinema. We wouldn't be here without you. Running an independent cinema comes with daily challenges, so every visit paid, coffee bought or membership taken really does make a difference.

This autumn we're delighted to present a special French season running through October. Highlights include 1969 drama *My Night with Maud* on Sunday 5 October and 1983 classic *L'Argent* on Sunday 12 October.

We're also excited to be relaunching our Parent & Baby screenings every Wednesday at 11am. These relaxed shows allow parents to enjoy the big screen while little ones (under 1 years) are welcome too.

For younger audiences, we have something extra special on Saturday 25 October: Disney Junior Cinema is a fun one-hour programme designed as the perfect introduction to cinema for children.

Very much for grown-ups, we will be showing Paul Thomas Anderson's *One Battle After Another* starring Leonardo DiCaprio in early October. This is already being touted as an Oscar contender and in some places as "horrifying yet ridiculously funny".

From Friday 10 October, we will be showing the acclaimed



new British release *I Swear*, following the true story of John Davidson and his life with Tourette's syndrome.

There are lots of ways to continue supporting the Phoenix: becoming a member, making a donation, buying a coffee, or simply buying a ticket. Every penny spent goes directly into running and preserving this historic local cinema.

From all of us at the Phoenix, thank you once again. Your support means the world to us, and we're proud to continue bringing films, events, and community to East Finchley. For the latest listings and updates, please visit our website at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk



COMING SOON AT ARTSDEPOT

GETTING TRIGGY WITH IT MATT PARKER DOES THE MATHS
Sat 11 Oct



LIZA PULMAN SINGS STREISAND
Thu 23 Oct



A SQUASH AND A SQUEEZE
Fri 24 – Sun 26 Oct



ALEX MCALEER: MIND READER
Sat 25 Oct

...and lots more! See the full line up at artsdepot.co.uk

arts depot

Box Office: 020 8369 5454
artsdepot.co.uk

artsdepot, North Finchley, N12 0GA