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# TV Week ahead by Mik Duffy

## PICK OF THE WEEK

**Zig-Zag Love**  
BBC1, Monday, 9pm

Directed by Gillies MacKinnon and headlined by Robert Carlyle, this one-off drama about first love and terminal illness arrives burdened with lofty ambitions and filmic expectations. But while Carlyle applies himself with professionalism and MacKinnon directs with sensitivity, the youthful co-stars are the most affecting.

Anthony Martin, the de facto lead despite Carlyle, plays Peter, a teenager in hospital battling testicular cancer. Compounding his medical woes are the interventions of his errant father Jacko (Carlyle). A ne'er-do-well whose instinctive response to news of his son's prognosis is to try to procure him a prostitute, Jacko's refusal to accept the staid responsibilities of parenthood is maddening.

Despite the absence of a fitting role model, Peter remains committed to his treatment programme and is buoyed by a sense of optimism. But when his best friend and fellow patient Elliot dies, Peter is forced to confront the graver implications of his plight. So, fleeing the ward, he steals his father's motorcycle and heads off to taste the fruits of adulthood before his illness advances. En route he picks up Ziggy (Cara Readle), a teenager with cerebral palsy who longs to escape the suffocating dictates of her protective father. But as their bond intensifies, Peter's health deteriorates, threatening their romantic idyll and placing the pair in peril.

## BEST DOCUMENTARY

**Cutting Edge: Watch Out! Bailiffs About**  
Channel 4, Monday, 9pm

Few welcome the arrival of a recession, but for Britain's bailiffs the downturn has led to a bonanza as thousands of previously steadfast consumers find themselves

unable to keep up with their repayments. And it's the uncomfortable gulf between society's haves and have no-longers which dominates this thoughtful look at the work of two collection agencies. Chris and

Danny, the brusque founders of repo firm Integrity Ethical, view their targets as irresponsible miscreants in dire need of a wake-up call. But Brian Pierson, an affable debt-collector who found his current calling when his last business collapsed, takes a more sympathetic approach and goes to touching pains to help debtors retain their dignity.

**Also try:** True Stories: Tears, Tiaras And Transsexuals (More4, Tuesday, 10pm). More 4's documentary strand continues with a no-holds-barred look at the world's foremost transsexual beauty pageant.

## BEST COMEDY

**Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle**  
BBC2, Monday, 10pm

Thanks to his uncompromising wit and unfashionable intelligence, Stewart Lee has been largely absent from our TV screens for the past decade. It's an inequity he corrects in suitably scabrous fashion with this splendid new run of biting stand-up rants.

**Also try:** That Mitchell And Webb Glimpse (BBC2, Monday, 9.45pm). The comic duo ponder the wonders of bronze and the art of padlock folding in this compendium of highlights from their last series.

## BEST CRIME DRAMA

**The No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency**  
BBC1, today, 9pm

After last year's rapturously received pilot there was little doubt that Botswanan gumshoe Mma Ramotswe would be returning for a full run of cases. But, without the presiding genius of the late Anthony Minghella, there was some doubt as to whether an ongoing series could maintain the same delicate mix of wit, whimsy and intelligence. Judging by this splendid sophomore outing, in which our heroine investigates the curious actions of a duplicitous dentist, it can.

**Also try:** Red Riding (Channel 4, Thursday, 9pm). David Morrissey faces the grim horrors of 1983 as the feverish Yorkshire Noir trilogy reaches its conclusion.

## BEST IMPORT

**The Unit**  
Wednesday, 10pm, Virgin 1

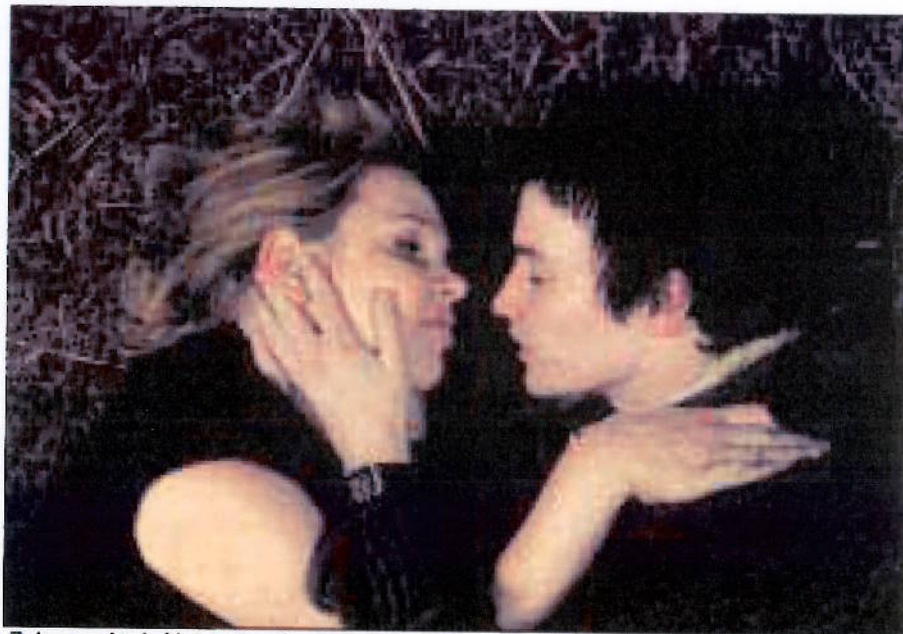


With *24* sinking into risibility and irrelevance there's room in the schedules for a better class of macho action series, a gap ably addressed by the return of David Mamet's special forces drama. Here, in a frenetic opener, stoic warrior Dennis Haysbert and his men battle to save the President Elect from a coup d'etat.

**Also try:** *The Shield* (Five USA, Monday, 10pm). Mackey's strike team try to free the kidnapped daughter of a drug kingpin as the LAPD cop drama continues.



**Ladies night:** Mma Makutsi and Mma Ramotswe investigate the actions of a duplicitous dentist



**To have and to hold:** Cara Readle and Anthony Martin get up close and personal in *Zig-Zag Love*



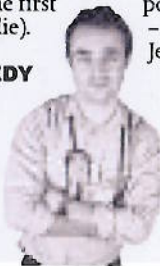
HIGHLIGHTS

**ZIG ZAG LOVE**

BBC1, 9pm  
Big names Robert Carlyle and Joe McFadden, below, star alongside Anthony Martin and Cara Readle in this bittersweet drama about a teenage cancer patient, Peter (Martin) who decides he doesn't want to die a virgin and breaks out of hospital and does a runner with the first girl he meets, Ziggy (Readle).

**STEWART LEE'S COMEDY VEHICLE**

BBC2, 10pm  
It's been a while since Stewart Lee did much on TV, aside from popping up on *Time Trumpet*, so it's good to see him back.



In this series he turns his sharp wit on modern phenomena, kicking off with "toilet books". Though it is an easy target it's nice to see him - a champion of political correctness - tearing into Jeremy Clarkson and his ilk.

**HAMMER AND TICKLE: STORYVILLE**

BBC2, 11:20pm  
Under oppressive regimes, often the only outlet for expression is humour, and so it was in the Soviet Union and its satellites. Ben



Lewis explores the jokes told by the people of the time and shows how they helped bridge the gap between reality and propaganda.

**IN SEARCH OF WABI SABI WITH MARCEL THEROUX**

BBC4, 9pm  
No, nothing to do with horseradish, Wabi Sabi is a complex Japanese code of aesthetics about the acceptance of transience. Novelist Marcel Theroux (brother of Louis, but more serious) travels across the Land of the Rising Sun to try to pin down what the heck it's all about.



## TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

### **Zig Zag Love**

BBC ONE, 9pm

This drama from BBC Scotland and Scottish Screen is set in a hospital where there has clearly been a terrible outbreak of Scottishstereotypitis: there's the hard drinker, the uptight Bearsden dad, the bolshy prostitute and on and on.

Also, everyone seems to think that because they're in Glasgow, they have to SHOUT.

It's a shame these serious flaws and cringeworthy dramatic cliches (the splashing in the stream and drying by the fire being the worst) distract from the central performance of Cara Readle as Ziggy, because she's very good and warm and engaging. It's just a pity she can't be heard above all the shouting.

### **The Undercover Princes**

BBC ONE, 11.15pm

This charming, if contrived, documentary was first shown on BBC Three, but this is a second chance to follow the undoubted star of the show: Crown Prince Manvendra. Manvendra is from one of India's richest royal families; he is also openly gay in a community that is openly homophobic.

The idea of the show is to take him, and the other two princes, from a crumbling palace under the Indian sun, move them into a flat lashed by the Brighton winds, and see what happens. The story of Manvendra's journey to Britain and his bumbling, silly, naive attempt to live as an ordinary man is charming and heartwarming. Be warned though: there is an unhappy ending.



# Heroes demand to hear truth about conspiracy

## Heroes

**BBC Two, 9.00pm**

LAST week, the rebel heroes managed to abduct HRG after tracking him down to a hotel, so Matt (Greg Grunberg), Peter and Suresh are all now trying to get him to reveal information about his part in the Building 26 conspiracy, which is led by Nathan.

Matt uses his brain mojo to work out what happened, and we get the back story of the government plot.

Meanwhile, we discover that someone beloved of the remaining heroes, may not be dead after all...

## Gangs of New York

**Channel 4, 10.00pm**

ONE of Martin Scorsese's greatest modern films, this is a wonderful historical epic.

Based around the early days of NY crime, it tells the tale of a battle between Irish immigrants and English/Americans for control of the Five Points neighbourhood of the city in the 1800s.

After Irish gang leader Priest (Liam Neeson) is killed by Daniel Day Lewis' Bill the Butcher, his son Amsterdam (Leonardo DiCaprio) escapes, but returns as an adult seeking revenge.

The tribal rivalries and political intrigue is all set to the backdrop of the Civil War, and the draft riots of 1863, where New Yorkers raged that they were being conscripted to fight, while the rich could buy their way out of the war.

## Zig Zag Love

**BBC One, 9.00pm**

THIS could be one of the TV highlights of the week – a new Scottish drama featuring some of our best talent.

Robert Carlyle stars alongside Joe McFadden in the story of a 16-year-old boy who has cancer and heads to the highlands for a life of freedom and adventure after his best friend dies.

With his despairing father (Carlyle) in chase, Peter (Anthony Martin) is joined on the run by Ziggy, a teenage girl with cerebral palsy.



## Emmerdale

**ITV, 7.00pm**

NATHAN orders Belle to stop hanging around Will and lies that his brother hates her. Belle is in pieces, so Lisa decides to have a showdown with the Wyldes.

After going in all guns blazing, Lisa is unnerved by how calmly Natasha deals with her complaint.

As Nathan also weighs in with a reasoned argument to explain his actions, Lisa loses face and has to back down.

## Stewart Lee's Comedy Vehicle

**BBC Two, 10.00pm**

THE comic seemingly best known for his contributions to talking head style countdown shows, breaks out with his new show.

Each of the six episodes sees Stewart exploring a different theme in a stand-up routine, illustrated with sketches featuring an ensemble cast.

In the first episode, he looks at the phenomenon of books, and celebrity books in particular.



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**PICK OF THE DAY**

**ZIG ZAG LOVE**  
A 16-year-old cancer patient escapes from hospital and travels to the Highlands in pursuit of an adventure, finding love on the way. Drama, with Anthony Martin and Robert Carlyle. (BBC 1, 9pm)



## 13 Questions: Cara Readle

by Ouch Team

12th March 2009

If Cara Readle looks familiar, it's because last time you saw her she was playing Layla, a disabled kid who lived in a children's home in the CBBC series *The Story of Tracy Beaker*. You'll notice she's grown up a bit since then. Now 17 years old, the Welsh actress and student has just completed *Zig Zag Love*, a film in which she stars alongside Robert Carlyle (*Hamish Macbeth*, *Trainspotting*, *The Full Monty*) and Anthony Martin (*River City*). A coming-of-age love story, it tells the tale of Peter, a young cancer patient who is desperate to lose his virginity and falls for Ziggy, a teenager who, like Cara herself, has cerebral palsy. Those with access to BBC Scotland can see the results on screen on Monday evening (16th March), though the rest of us will be able to catch up with it on iPlayer.

Ouch grabbed fifteen minutes out of her busy schedule to pose our fiendish 13 questions about acting, orange squash and college coursework ...

**Uppermost in my mind today is ...**



College work. We've got to make a half hour long film and I'm worried about it. It's a lot of work to do in a short amount of time. We've only got two months. I don't even know what the film's going to be about yet, as we only got the assignment today.

**I want to ban ...**

I dunno. Nothing at the moment. I did want to ban smoking, but they already did that. If you're with someone who's smoking, it's horrible - all your clothing and hair stinks.

**Being a disabled actor is ...**

Great. It's something that I'm able to do and nothing can stop me. If other people see me as a role model, it's great to give other people confidence.

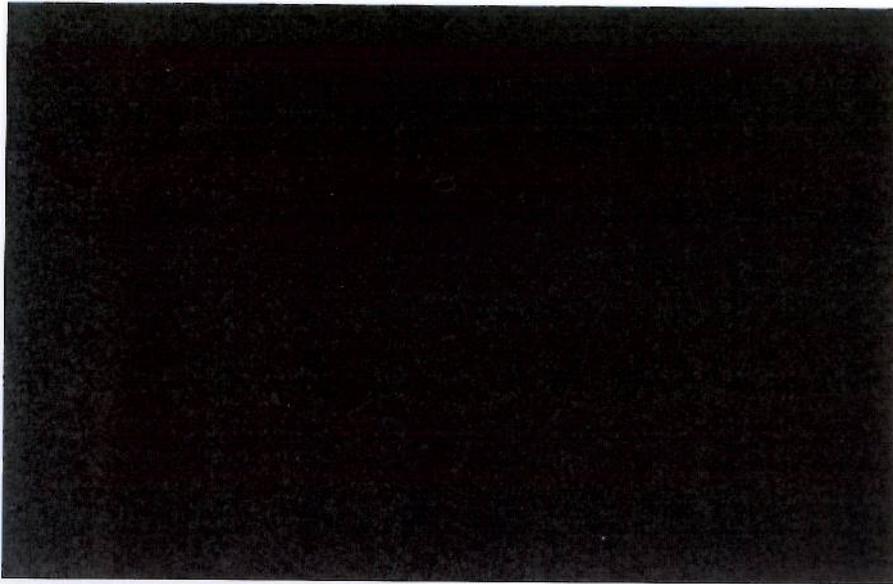
**Being in Tracy Beaker was ...**

Absolutely amazing. I got the part because I went to local drama classes. My teacher knew the casting director so some of us went for an audition and I got called back three times, then got the part. The entire cast was under the age of eighteen. We had fun on set and then went out afterwards and socialised.

**Playing a teenager in love is ...**

Extremely different! It was fun. Everyone experiences this when they're a teenager and it was great to get the opportunity to show that. Mary, who wrote *Tracy Beaker*, had the idea and thought of me. We talked about it and she wrote the script. It was really, really nice that she had that confidence in me. I still had to audition for the part, though. I thought playing the romantic scenes would be really hard and I thought I was going to be nervous, but I wasn't.

**Watch a preview clip from *Zig Zag Love* below. Ziggy and Peter have just run off together and share their first kiss:**



**I struggle with ...**

Quite a few things! Some physical things because of my disability, obviously. But I just find a different way of doing them.

**I excel at ...**

Talking! I talk about everything! I talk all the time, I can't help it at all. I used to get in trouble for it. Now I try and shut up, so I'm getting better.

**My ideal dinner guest is ...**

Peter Kay. He's so funny. I'd cook him pasta 'cos I love pasta. Many people find this weird but I eat it plain sometimes. It's nice like that. I like all sorts. If we have spaghetti, my mum cuts it up for me.



Cara & Anthony Martin, in a scene from *Zig Zag Love*

**I couldn't live without ...**

Chocolate. And music. But I try not to eat chocolate all the time 'cos I keep putting on weight! I listen to all kinds of music, but my absolute favourite is Kings of Leon - they're amazing. I haven't seen them live, but I'd love to. They were at the Brit awards and they were amazing. I usually put my iPod on shuffle. If it's a depressing song and I'm feeling depressed, I skip it to something happy.

**If I didn't live in the UK, I'd live in ...**

Thailand. I went to Thailand - Bangkok - for three weeks when I was only about eight years old. It was great. Or America. Well, Florida. I love it there. I love theme parks and in America they are about ten times bigger and faster. There's loads more of them, too.

**I spend most of my time ...**

At college, unfortunately. Otherwise I go into town with my friends, shopping. Or I go to my friends' houses and hang around there, or they come to mine. When I'm not doing college work, I watch TV, or use MSN and Facebook. I watch *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders* and *Skins*. I love *Skins* - it's amazing.

**My favourite drink is ...**

Orange squash. I drink it all the time, out of habit. I have it about medium strength, I can't stand weak squash. I don't like water so I have squash instead. I know it sounds weird but water doesn't taste of anything; that's probably why I don't like it.

**In the future, I hope to ...**

Keep acting in film and telly. I know it depends on whether you can get jobs, but I'm going to keep on trying. There's nothing else I want to do, really.

• **Zig Zag Love**, described as 'a bittersweet tale of first love and last chances', is on BBC One (in Scotland only) on Monday 16th March at 9.00pm. It will be available on [iPlayer](#) soon afterwards.

• BBC One Scotland is available in the rest of the UK on Sky channel 971, Tiscali TV channel 956, Freesat channel 960, and also on Virgin Media channel 862.

• If you have High Definition TV, **Zig Zag Love** is on BBC HD a little later at 10.00pm on Monday 16th March. BBC HD is available across the whole of the UK.

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