

## Seven Days

What to do in your area

**GIG | Skibadee's Birthday**

Indigo At The O2, Peninsula

Join the drum'n'bass legend to celebrate another year on the clock. Dirty beats.

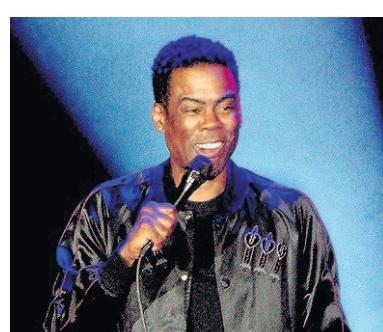
Jan 27, 10pm, from £12.25

**CONCERT | Rush Hour**

Blackheath Halls, Blackheath

Pianist Arturo Irisarri, violinist Katharina Von Colson and clarinetist Hugo Lau perform.

Jan 26, 6pm, free (booking required)

**COMEDY | Chris Rock**

The O2 arena, Greenwich Peninsula

There's a no mobiles policy for the comic's *Total Blackout* tour, a title that works on so many levels...

Jan 27-28, 6.30pm, from £31.25

**SOON | Trumpageddon**

Greenwich Theatre, Greenwich

Trump's doing a show at Greenwich Theatre instead of coming on a state visit, apparently.

Feb 3, 7.30pm, £16

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# rethinking the rom-com

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Author Zoe May says making dating experiences realistic was key to her debut novel *Perfect Match*, writes Erica Bush

**H**onesty is best according to author Zoe May. She recently had her debut novel, *Perfect Match*, published by Harper Collins and it is intended to deliver a dash of reality to an often cliche-ridden genre.

"I think sometimes with rom-coms authors create these nicey-nice-type characters and, personally, as a reader I find it a bit frustrating," said the Woolwich-based writer.

"People are flawed so I tried to make my main character, Sophia Jones, and her dating experiences, realistic."

"I don't beat around the bush or try and make it seem more romantic or more fairytale-like than it is."

"I'm just so honest."

She's not lying.

*Perfect Match* follows the fictional love life of 28-year-old Lewisham-based protagonist Sophia, as she navigates London's dating scene.

It covers dating apps, dick pics, ghosting, catfishing and the occasional foot fetish.

Zoe, who has wanted to be a novelist since the age of 15, said her book was largely based on her own experiences.

"Part of it is autobiographical, because I've done dating in London," she said.

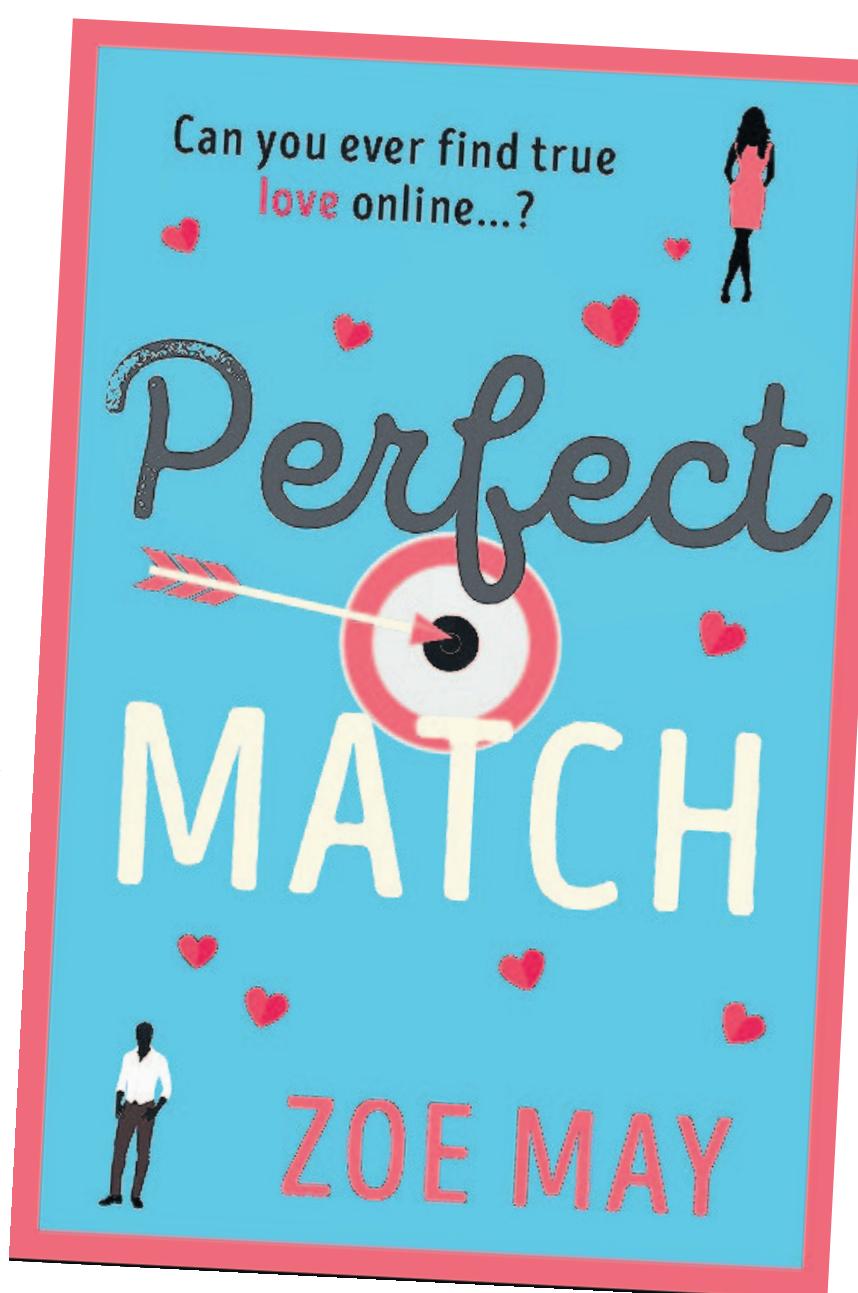
"For example, in the book some of the messages that Sophia receives from her online profiles - which are so bizarre and rude and obnoxious - I actually just copied and pasted from my own inbox."

Some of Sophia's other dating nightmares - being asked for pictures of her feet, having a man burp in her face and nearly meeting up with a convicted drug dealer - were also drawn from Zoe's life.

"These things actually happened to me," said Zoe, who worked in PR before turning to writing. "I wrote a novel so at least I could get some good out of it."

A major theme in the book is whether it is possible to find love online. Zoe is not completely sold on digital dating.

"I've done the apps and I haven't had the best experiences," she said.



"We spend too much time on our own just sitting in front of the TV on apps and it just creates this laziness."

"I think it's possible to find love online but it's also really important to put yourself out there and not spend too much time online. I think the way

forward is just going out and doing stuff you already enjoy so that if you don't meet anyone you've still had a good day or night."

*Perfect Match* is out now, available from Amazon, iBooks and Kobo, priced £2.99