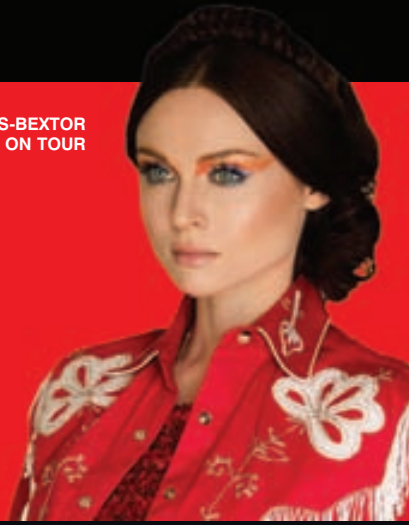


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by week listings guide



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**Paul Carrack**



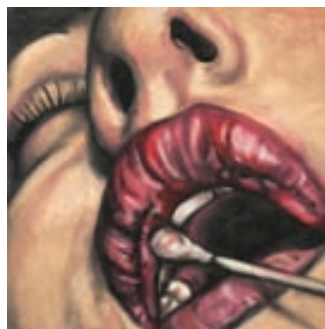
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## First Word

### Darwin's legacy explored in Magnum Photos' new Shrewsbury exhibition

Shrewsbury's most famous son, the 19th century naturalist and geologist Charles Darwin, is the inspiration behind a special exhibition being presented on the streets of the Shropshire town this month.

Evolution Explored has been curated by world-famous photography agency Magnum Photos, an international co-operative owned by its photographer members.

Magnum has approximately one million photographs in both print and transparency in a physical library, with more than 500,000 images available online.

Commenting on Evolution Explored, the agency's Emily Graham said: "We're delighted to be collaborating on this outdoor exhibition, looking at Magnum's archive through the prism of evolution. As Magnum moves into its 70th year, the exhibition will display powerful historic and contemporary photographs exploring Darwin's legacy in modern society."

The new exhibition is launched on 9 February to coincide with Darwin Day, and will be available to view at St Mary's Church and in The Square until 23 April.



Photo credit: LON2153 Tiananmen Square, Beijing, CHINA. 1989. © Stuart Franklin/Magnum Photos

### The Fizzogs go Stateside



Black Country comedy act The Fizzogs are hoping to take America by storm this summer.

The popular trio of Sue Hawkins, Deb Nicholls and Jacky Fellows will head to New York with their Dancing Grannies routine, which has been seen by more than 300 million people on social media.

Speaking to the Stourbridge News, Deb said: "We aim to flash mob in New York this summer, as the Americans keep asking when we're coming over. It'll cost an arm and a leg to get there, so we're looking for sponsorship."

The Fizzogs are currently touring their latest show, Suck It And See, to venues across the Midlands. For tickets and more information, visit [thefizzogs.com](http://thefizzogs.com).

### Tamworth gets jamming to help youngsters

A free project designed to help young musicians develop their song-writing, musician-ship, performance and promoting skills has been launched in Tamworth.

Tamworth Jam is aimed at 12 to 19-year-olds who love to 'jam' but aren't sure how to make the leap from their bedrooms into the limelight.

The six-month initiative comprises a series of weekly workshops presented by a team of highly experienced and professional mentors. Participants will then be able to put their new skills to the test by performing at locations throughout Tamworth town centre and in a variety of unusual spaces.



### Boxing legend Floyd Mayweather at the ICC

Five-division world champion boxer Floyd Mayweather is the main attraction at a Las Vegas-themed ball at Birmingham's ICC on Saturday 4 March.

Widely considered to be one of the greatest boxers of all time and undefeated as a professional, Mayweather will take part in Q&A

and meet-and-greet sessions.

Standard tickets start at £39.95 (+£2.56 fee) and include the opportunity to watch Mayweather's interview live on stage, Vegas-themed entertainment and the use of on-site bars.

### Valentine's Day magic comes to The Potteries

Britain's Got Talent star Jamie Raven is set to make Valentine's Day a 'magic' experience for audiences at Stoke-on-Trent's Regent Theatre on Tuesday 14 February.

The popular magician, whose online videos have been viewed over 100 million times, visits the Potteries as part of a UK tour that's been extended 'by popular demand'.

To book tickets, visit [atgtickets.com](http://atgtickets.com)



## Timbersports are go...

An elite lumberjack sports competition is next month hosting a 'taster weekend' at Shropshire's Harper Adams University (Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 March).

STIHL Timbersports is looking for people who might have the necessary skill to take part in a British Championship event.

After completing an initial assessment, each taster-weekend attendee will receive expert training from the current British professional team in three rookie disciplines: Stock Saw, Single Buck and Underhand Chop. The most promising participants will then be invited to receive further training.

Anyone wishing to take part in the taster weekend must submit an entry form, which is available online at [stihl.co.uk/newcomers](http://stihl.co.uk/newcomers). For more information, visit [stihl.co.uk/timbersports](http://stihl.co.uk/timbersports). Applications will be accepted until 5 February. Places are limited and no entries or spectators will be permitted on the day.



## New Vic in Young Director scheme

The New Vic Theatre has launched a scheme which will allow eight aspiring directors to engage with the venue's shows through workshops, work shadowing and mentoring. The Newcastle-under-Lyme theatre has joined forces with the country's leading training scheme for aspiring directors - the Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme (RTYDS) - to provide an Introduction To Directing programme.

The scheme will run over five weeks between February and March. Commenting on the initiative, Sue Emmas, RTYDS Artistic Director, said: "Through Introduction To Directing and three-month placements, RTYDS creates pathways for talented directors from under-represented backgrounds to learn their craft, build networks and take the first step towards a career as a professional theatre director.

"Directors should be reflective of the diversity of our towns and cities, and RTYDS is working towards making this a reality."

## Natasha J Barnes to star in new version of Funny Girl

A critically acclaimed new version of hit musical *Funny Girl* is visiting the Regent Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent next month.

Telling the story of Broadway star and comedian Fanny Brice, the show features West End leading lady Natasha J Barnes and recording artist Darius Campbell.

*Funny Girl* was written over 50 years ago and debuted on Broadway in 1963. The show made a global star of Barbra Streisand and boasts the iconic songs *People* and *Don't Rain On My Parade*.

The touring production visits the Regent from Tuesday 28 March to Saturday 1 April. It returns to the Midlands in the summer, stopping off at the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Monday 24 to Saturday 29 July.



## Moomins at Shrewsbury arts venue

Shrewsbury venue The Hive is hosting a must-attend event for all fans of the Moomins on Friday 10 March.

The popular arts centre will host two screenings of the 2014 animated feature film, *Moomins On The Riviera*.

After each screening there will be a Q&A session with the movie's director, Leslie Stewart, and co-director and producer Hanna Hemilä.

The first screening and Q&A, at 1.30pm, is aimed at film professionals and students; the second, at 4.30pm, is for families and Moomins fans.

Tickets can be purchased from [hiveonline.org.uk](http://hiveonline.org.uk)

## Independent art gallery makes funds appeal

Wolverhampton's independent Asylum Art Gallery has launched an appeal to raise £6,000 towards its costs.

The gallery offers a free space for artists to exhibit their work, and since opening in 2014 has held 45 free exhibitions. It has also played a central role in the development of the Westside Artists' Quarter concept, designed to provide a supportive framework for the city's artistic community... Anybody interested in contributing to Asylum's appeal should visit [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/WestSideAQ](http://justgiving.com/crowdfunding/WestSideAQ)

## RSC invites theatre groups to perform in the great outdoors

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is offering amateur and professional theatre groups, schools and colleges the opportunity to put on a play in its open-air performance space this summer.

Located on the banks of the River Avon in Stratford, The Dell is a 'venue' in which groups can either perform an established piece of work or create a new one inspired by Shakespeare or his contemporaries.

Commenting on the opportunity, RSC Events & Exhibitions Officer Nicola Salmon said: "The Dell is a great platform for amateur theatre companies, community groups, schools, universities and professional theatre companies to perform to an audience of all ages. Audiences love the free productions that companies bring to The Dell, and enjoy the unique atmosphere that comes from plays being performed outside by the River Avon during the summer months."

Two performance slots are available on Saturdays and Sundays at The Dell between Saturday 3 June and Sunday 27 August.

Anybody interested in mounting a production should fill in an application form, which can be downloaded from the RSC's website at: [rsc.org.uk/thedell](http://rsc.org.uk/thedell).

The closing date for applications is Monday 6 March.

## First Word

### Wicked flies back to the Birmingham Hippodrome

Wicked is returning to the Midlands next year. The West End and Broadway musical phenomenon, telling the untold story of the Witches of Oz, will show at Birmingham Hippodrome from Wednesday 4 to Sunday 29 April.

Commenting on the news, Executive Producer Michael McCabe said: "We were overwhelmed by the incredible response from audiences and critics alike when we first brought Wicked to Birmingham in 2014, and it's extraordinary to think that over 110,000 people came and saw us. The whole team at the Birmingham Hippodrome showed such tremendous enthusiasm and support, and we're all really delighted to be returning to this truly magnificent venue in 2018."

Tickets for Wicked's return to the Hippodrome go on sale next month, on Tuesday 21 March. For more information about the show, visit [WickedTheMusical.co.uk](http://WickedTheMusical.co.uk)



### Oswestry TIC on the lookout for volunteers

An Oswestry group is looking for volunteers to help run the Mile End tourist information centre. The group, which is asking people to donate half a day of their time once a month, is hopeful that a sufficient number of volunteers will come forward to mean that the centre can stay open eight hours a day, seven days a week. For more information, call 01691 610952.

### Home-produced at the Grand...

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre has announced that the first major show to be produced in-house at the venue for more than 40 years will be *Brassed Off*. Adapted by Paul Allen from the screenplay by Mark Herman, the play tells the story of Grimley Colliery Band's attempts to play in the National Brass Band Competition at the Royal Albert Hall, even as the local pit faces closure. The new production shows at the Grand from Wednesday 23 August to Sunday 3 September. Tickets are now on sale and can be purchased by calling 01902 429212 or visiting [grandtheatre.co.uk](http://grandtheatre.co.uk).

### Plenty on offer at LGBT festival

This month's National Festival Of LGBT History features a number of Shrewsbury-hosted events. Taking place across the weekend of 17 to 19 February, the festival includes talks by prominent authors (including Diana Souhami), youth group performances, films, exhibitions and taster presentations looking at various aspects of LGBT history. For more information, visit [shrewsburylgbthistory.org.uk](http://shrewsburylgbthistory.org.uk)

### Line-up announced for Staffordshire festival

Folk-rock legends Fairport Convention are celebrating their 50th anniversary with an appearance at Staffordshire's Acoustic Festival Of Britain, taking place at Uttoxeter Racecourse from 2 to 4 June.

The popular band will be joined at the three-day event by, among others: Martin Turner (founding member of Wishbone Ash); chart-topping three-piece Hoosiers; pioneering folk-punk band The Men They Couldn't Hang; and 1980s synth-pop star Howard Jones.

The 2017 festival also features a late-night blues bar, afternoon comedy in the live lounge, the ever-popular ukulele workshops event and an extended children's area.

For further details, visit [acousticfestival.co.uk](http://acousticfestival.co.uk).

### Potteries museum receives £300,000 of funding from Arts Council England

Stoke-on-Trent's tourist economy has received a £300,000 boost from Arts Council England.

The investment will allow local arts and cultural organisations to team up with partners in order to attract more visitors to the city. Commenting on the award, Peter Knott, Midlands Area Director for Arts Council England, said: "This investment presents a really exciting opportunity to put art, culture and creativity at the heart of plans to bring both domestic and international tourists to Stoke. Over the coming years, we hope to see these new partnerships and a joined-up approach encouraging growth in the local visitor economy."

### Tamworth attraction welcomes new ride

Drayton Manor Park in Staffordshire is launching a brand new ride in its Thomas Land attraction.

James And The Red Balloon, which opens on Saturday 1 April, will be joining 20 other rides and attractions based on the popular series of books. The £250,000 ride takes visitors to the lofty heights of 1.5 metres and has a maximum speed of 5.5 RPM.

Thomas Land was launched in 2008 and recently underwent a £2.5million expansion.

Commenting on the attraction's new addition, Drayton Manor Park's Managing Director, William Bryan, said: "This is another exciting step in Thomas Land's progression. We're always looking for new ways to excite and entertain our visitors, and James And The Red Balloon seemed the perfect addition. It's the ideal ride for the whole family to enjoy and will act as a great stepping stone for those little ones looking for their next thrilling experience."

To book tickets or for more information about the venue, visit [draytonmanor.co.uk](http://draytonmanor.co.uk) or call 0844 472 1950.



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2017**  
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**SYMPHONY HALL**



**SUPERHEROES AT  
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CHRIS COWDREY  
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# Shobna Gulati

**Ex-Corrie favourite talks about starring in Anita And Me at the Wolverhampton Grand**



In the 20 years since Meera Syal's semi-autobiographical portrait of life in the Black Country in the 1970s first appeared in print, it's become something of a contemporary classic, spawning a popular film adaptation and even, much to Syal's own bemusement, becoming a GCSE set text.

In 2015, *Anita And Me* made its stage debut at Birmingham REP; now the theatre's artistic director, Roxana Silbert, is bringing the much-loved story back home to the Midlands with a run at the Wolverhampton Grand.

Starring in the show as mother to the teenage protagonist Meena (the 'Me' of the title) is Shobna Gulati, best known for her long-running role as Sunita Alahan in *Coronation Street*, as well as for her regular appearances on *Loose Women*. Taking over the role of Daljit from Ayesha Dharker, Gulati is very much looking forward to returning to the city and the theatre.

"I love Wolverhampton," she says. "I've got quite a special relationship with it, actually. When I was a dancer I used to work for Sampad, so I went round schools in Cannock, Wolverhampton and Birmingham teaching creative dance using Indian Classical dance as a basis. I was also here for 16 weeks to do panto - in those days the Grand's was the longest-running panto in the country."

Gulati describes her character Daljit as a loving but often quietly disapproving mother who, like many parents, has a "sticky relationship" with her daughter.

"I think Daljit sees a lot of herself in Meena, and is perhaps still holding onto her own



childhood through her, but obviously as a teenager Meena wants to explore things for herself. Daljit knows that she had a good upbringing back at home and she struggles to understand why that same upbringing isn't working for Meena in a different place. She never loses her temper, she's just frustrated and can't understand why Meena has to fight so often when she and her husband give her all the love and support in the world."

Meera Syal remains closely involved with the retelling of her story, and the opportunity to finally work with her - as well as with award-winning playwright Tanika Gupta - was a major factor in Gulati's decision to join the cast.

"Meera and I have always sort of missed each other on the way. We've known of each other but we've never been able to work together because our schedules have never quite matched up. I think the things that people like Meera have achieved are just amazing - they've put their heads above the parapet and just kept going despite the struggles of being 'other' in this community we all live in. And because it's semi-autobiographical, in a way, I get to play Meera's mum, so it's a real honour."

Despite not having read the book or seen the film before, Gulati immediately identified with the characters, finding elements of the story that chimed with her own experiences of growing up in an immigrant family in industrial Oldham.

"I am going to be playing my mum! Maybe that's a cop-out, but Meera and I are around the same age, and I can see a lot of my relationship with my mother when I was a teenager in this story. In fact, it's even more like my mum's relationship with my big sister. I was the youngest girl in my family, but when my sister was growing up, my mum and dad were in England bringing up a young girl for the first time.

"My sisters always used to read Jackie magazine, and although it was more Smash Hits by the time I was a teenager, I do remember slipping their copies of Jackie under my pillow at night to have a

read of it. There's a great bit in the play where Daljit's having a go at Meena about that - you know, Cathy and Clare, what do they know? All they know about is boyfriends, and it's not important. All of this - family and community - is what's important."

Things have changed considerably since 1972, but there's also plenty that's stayed the same. Perhaps more pertinently, thinks Gulati, there are aspects of Britain in 2017 which seem to have more in common with the culture of the 1970s than with life in the intervening decades.

"From a historical point of view, the story examines the movement of people into small communities and how those communities responded. You've got these areas where economically things are tough for everyone, and the thing to blame always seemed to be whoever was considered an outsider. When I was growing up, I was constantly reminded of how different I was, and for a while I thought that things were moving on, but I think we've actually gone slightly backwards now. We've gone back to people feeling suspicious of people from other places, and as a grown-up adult I'm once again reminded of how different I am, even though I was born and raised here."

Fortunately, there are movements for positive change, and this very production aims to be part of that, promoting engagement and interaction between communities.

"Anita And Me is part of the legacy of a group called the Touring Consortium, who go into theatres that don't necessarily have that engagement with the wider diverse community. Hopefully this play will be a good way of beginning a process for people who perhaps aren't quite so culturally engaged, and helping to turn the wheel forwards again."

Some places have further to go than others. Gulati has loved her time performing in Grease at Leicester's Curve Theatre, describing it as a place where "diversity permeates". As rehearsals for Anita And Me commence, that production

is still ongoing, leaving her running between Leicester and Wolverhampton in the middle of the day. It sounds like hard work, but she shrugs it off.

"I'm a bit of a boring old person now because I'm just getting up, going to work, going to another work, going home to bed, and then getting up and doing it all again! In my youth I'd have done the same, but then I'd also have gone out for a drink afterwards. I probably wouldn't have slept! But I can't burn the candle at both ends anymore..."

Though it's something she's come to relatively late in her career, musical theatre is a natural choice for Gulati, who has always sung at home and started dance classes at the tender age of seven. One of her first jobs after leaving Coronation Street was on the UK tour of Mamma Mia!, which she says was a bit like coming "full circle".

"In Western culture we often tend to put things in boxes - you either sing or dance or act or play music - whereas in Indian Classical dance you do all those things. It's expressive, so you learn to act as well as how to dance technically and to accompany, so it's a more holistic way of looking at performance. When my mum came to see Mamma Mia!, she said, 'This is what you've always wanted to do, right from when you were a little girl.'"

So with such a varied career behind her, what's next for Shobna Gulati? Is there anything still left to tick off the list? "Well, I've been making my way for the last 31 years, and I think I've done most things at some point, but do you know... I've never actually been a lead. So if there was something that would be suitable for someone of my age, I'd love to do that. I'd love to play Cleopatra in Anthony And Cleopatra. I feel like I'm ready for that now."

.....  
**Anita And Me shows at  
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## Historic North Staffordshire pub set for kitchen and dining area expansion

The owners of North Staffordshire's historic Grade II-listed Stafford Arms pub are to extend its kitchen and create space for an extra 30 diners.

General manager Jason Lightfoot has revealed that the 17th century Bagnall venue's forthcoming development will also include an outdoor patio where regulars can enjoy a drink in the summer.

Speaking to the Stoke Sentinel about the expansion, Assistant Manager Dan Trueman said: "Expanding the kitchen will make the business more efficient. We're hoping to bring the capacity of the restaurant up to about 120 diners." everywhere but at the moment there aren't that many locals apart from in the bar. A lot of people don't even know Bagnall exists. Hopefully it'll be onwards and upwards from here!"



## REVIEW: Sir Jack's Restaurant, Wolverhampton Wolverhampton Wanderers aiming for success off the pitch as well as on



Sir Jack's is situated in the heart of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club's Molineux Stadium, occupying a central, pitch-facing position in the Billy Wright Stand.

It holds 60 covers and can be hired out for private parties. It also boasts a private suite, accommodating up to 20 people, which can be hired at no extra cost.

The restaurant hosts a gourmet

evening once a month which enables diners to feast on flavours from around the world. Each course is served with complementary wines and liqueurs. On arrival, we were politely shown over to our table and informed that, until April, diners can enjoy two courses each and a bottle of wine for £20 per person. Unfortunately we were driving, so steered clear of the wine and chose not to take advantage

of the deal on offer.

To start, I opted for the seared scallops, served with pineapple, fennel, sesame tuille and black garlic. It was an intriguing and unusual flavour combination which unfortunately just didn't work for me. The scallops were cooked nicely - however, there were only two of them, and they were very small. I would have liked to have seen a couple more for the £7 price tag, or even an increase in the size of the two that were on my plate. The sesame tuille was delicious and definitely the highlight of the dish.

My partner opted for the truffle risotto, which was served with textures of hard Italian cheese and purple basil. The flavour was lovely and creamy but only showcased a very subtle hint of truffle. The rice was slightly underdone.

For my main course, I opted for the duo of pork, which comprised braised cheek, tenderloin (served pink), charred carrot puree, kale and dauphinoise. Both pork elements were cooked beautifully. The other elements of the dish complemented the meat perfectly, resulting in a tasty main course.

My partner opted for 8oz picanha beef steak, which was served with chestnut mushrooms, tomato and chips. It arrived medium rare, as requested. It wasn't the best steak we'd ever tasted, but certainly did the job. The chips were cooked well and the side of béarnaise we added was delicious.

For dessert we shared the bitter chocolate sorbet, served with honeycomb and rhubarb espuma, and the caramel mille feuille. The chocolate sorbet was the highlight of the evening for me. The dish was bursting with very welcome and complementary flavours and the honeycomb pieces were stunning.

My partner's highlight was the mille feuille, which was served with banana, mango, coffee and peanut.

The restaurant's welcoming and knowledgeable manager informed us that the menu is changing in early February and will include, among other new dishes, wood pigeon and king prawns.

Overall, the food wasn't anything to shout out about in comparison to other restaurants of a similar stature, but the attentive and friendly service made for an enjoyable evening nevertheless.

Lauren Foster

Food:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Service:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Ambience:	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
Overall value	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■
<b>OVERALL</b>	■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

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## Shrewsbury to get its third specialist Japanese restaurant

A specialist Japanese eatery is set to enhance Shrewsbury's already impressive restaurant scene.

The site on which the new venue will open is owned by Mike Matthews, who is also the proprietor of the nearby Prince Rupert Hotel.

"Shrewsbury has enjoyed considerable growth in its nighttime and hospitality economy in recent years," says Mike, "and when we decided to let the site, we secured a tenant very quickly."

The new addition will be the town's third Japanese eatery, following in the footsteps of the well-established Momo-No-Ki venue and Umai.

It's anticipated that the restaurant will create at least 10 full and part-time jobs.



## A Peach of a treat for your Valentine

Popular Shrewsbury restaurant The Peach Tree is offering two courses for £22.95 or three courses for £27.95 to diners who visit on Friday 10, Saturday 11 or Tuesday 14 February, as part of a Valentine's Day promotion.

Dishes featured on the menu include slow-braised lamb shank, grilled wild salmon and

crispy scallops.

Booking is essential and a non-refundable deposit of £10 per head is required to confirm diners' reservations.

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## Black Sabbath

Genting Arena, Birmingham, 2 & 4 February

Nearly five decades ago - and created by a young Birmingham band - heavy metal was born.

Black Sabbath helped define the genre they pioneered with releases such as their self-titled debut album (1970), *Paranoid* (also 1970) and *Master Of Reality* (1971). Following the break-up of their previous band, *Mythology*, in 1968, guitarist Tony Iommi and drummer Bill Ward decided to form a heavy blues rock band in Aston. They enlisted bassist Geezer Butler and vocalist Ozzy Osbourne, who had played together in a band called *Rare Breed*. Over the years, Black Sabbath have survived a number of line-up changes. The current version of the band features Osbourne, Iommi and Geezer, who this month bring their Farewell Tour back to the place where it all began.



## Kings Of Leon

Genting Arena, Birmingham, Mon 20 February

It's a family affair for Kings Of Leon. Comprising three brothers and a cousin, the Nashville-based quartet's early-career sound brought together Southern rock and blues influences. Their music has gradually developed through the years to include a variety of genres and a more alternative, arena rock sound.

They've released seven albums since their inception in the year 2000, five of them reaching number one in the UK Album Charts.

The band return to the Midlands to promote their latest album, *Walls*.

## Pet Shop Boys

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Fri 24 February

Having formed in London in 1981, English electronic pop duo Pet Shop Boys features Neil Tennant (main vocals, keyboards, occasional guitar) and Chris Lowe (keyboards, occasional vocals). Not only are they listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the most successful duo in UK music history, they've also bagged three Brit Awards, six Grammy nominations and, since 1985, 42 Top 30 singles and 22 Top 10 hits in the UK Singles Chart, including four number ones.

This month sees the pair return to Birmingham to perform a set that features songs from their acclaimed new album, *Super*, and classic hits and album tracks from the past 30 years.



## Tony O'Malley & Ross Stanley

Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Sun 19 February

Singer, songwriter and keyboardist Tony O'Malley (pictured) and award-winning jazz Hammond organist Ross Stanley here present a night of soul, funk and jazz, played in their own distinctive style.

O'Malley was the keyboardist for *Arrival*, whose hits include *Friends* and *I Will Survive*. Whilst a member of 10CC, he recorded with Bob Dylan on the singer's *Desire* album.

Stanley started playing piano at the age of four and has performed with jazz stars including Will Vinson, Dennis Rollings, Guy Barker and Joel Frahm.

## Sophie Ellis-Bextor

O2 Institute, Birmingham,  
Fri 17 February



Murder On The Dancefloor singer Sophie Ellis-Bextor's latest release, *Familia*, marks a critically acclaimed change in her musical direction, showcasing her newfound lyrical and musical maturity.

Described by Ellis-Bextor as "the bolshier, more extrovert little sister" of previous release *Wanderlust*, *Familia* was introduced by the Radio Two A-List track *Come With Us*, which became an instant disco-pop anthem.

She here visits Birmingham as part of an 11-date tour of the UK.

## Inni K and Jess Morgan

The Hive, Shrewsbury, Sun 5 February; Stafford Gatehouse, Mon 6 February

Since the 2015 release of her acclaimed debut album, *The King Has Two Horse's Ears*, Irish singer and multi-instrumentalist Inni K (pictured) has been wowing audiences with her fresh indie-folk sound. She's here joined by singer-songwriter Jess Morgan, who's inspired by artists such as Billy Bragg and Nanci Griffith.



## Spring King

The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,  
Fri 17 February

This Manchester-based indie group is the brainchild of production virtuoso Tarek Musa, who began the project by ripping out a disused bathroom in his house.

Peter Darlington, James Green and Andy Morton then came on board and Spring King launched their career with a first EP in April 2015.

The release received incredible radio support, with the track *City* being the first ever play on Apple Music's Beats1 radio show with Zane Lowe.

## Dreadzone

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton,  
Sat 11 February



Presenting an eclectic fusion of dub, reggae, techno, folk and rock music, Dreadzone formed in 1993, during their early years employing backing vocalists who included Melanie Blatt, Denise van Outen and Alison Goldfrapp.

Their follow-up release, 1994's *Second Light*, was championed by the legendary John Peel, who cited it as one of his favourite albums of all time.

This month sees Dreadzone releasing their eighth studio offering, *Dread Times*, their third release on their own Dubwiser label. The album showcases the band's old skool dread sound whilst also digging deeper into their dub and reggae roots.

It's described as 'an eclectic rolling journey that recalls elements from an illustrious 23-year history while always looking ahead to the next phase.'

## The Blockheads

The Robin, Bilston, Friday 24 February

The Blockheads formed in 1977 to promote Ian Dury's album, *New Boots And Panties*, on the first Stiff Records tour of the UK.

The band are now fronted by one of the late Dury's best friends, Blockheads vocalist and wordsmith Derek 'The Draw'.

See them perform old favourites such as *Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick* - as well as new material - as part of their 40th anniversary tour.



## Kaiser Chiefs

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham,  
Sat 25 February

Fronted by the charismatic Ricky Wilson, indie rock five-piece Kaiser Chiefs formed in Leeds in the year 2000.

Their trademark sound has delivered hits such as *Oh My God*, *Ruby* and *I Predict A Riot*, to name a few and has helped to establish them as one of the leading bands of their generation.

Read the interview with band member Simon Rix online at [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)



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Jennifer Pike  
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## An Audience With Lesley Garrett

The Place, Oakengates, Shropshire, Tues 21 February

Although many would claim that she's been displaced as Britain's best-loved soprano by Welsh wonder Katherine Jenkins, Lesley Garrett retains an army of appreciative fans and continues to produce superlative performances.

These latest Midlands appearances by the West End star follow the well-established 'audience with' format, combining song with plenty of reminiscences and not a little lighthearted chat.

## CBSO: Holst's The Planets

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Wed 8 February

Gustav Holst's seven-movement orchestral suite - each movement of which is named after a planet in the solar system - is one of the most famous and familiar works of classical music ever written, particularly the Mars and Jupiter movements. Earth is excluded from the work, the concept of the suite being astrological rather than astronomical, while Pluto's discovery was still some years away at the time Holst was writing his masterpiece. The composer was still alive when the ninth planet became known to scientists in 1930, but he opted out of writing an additional movement, believing that The Planets had already cast too significant a shadow over the rest of his work.

This City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra performance of the suite is accompanied by Sāvitrī, another work by Holst which tells an ancient Indian tale of a love that proves stronger than death. The concert is part of Symphony Hall's Spirit Of England series - a season of presentations celebrating some of the country's best-known composers and featuring a wide selection of memorable music.

## Juan Diego Florez In Recital

Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Tues 21 February

Forty-three-year-old Cuban heart-throb Juan Diego Flórez is widely acclaimed as one of the greatest bel canto tenors ever to have lived.

Thirty years ago, achieving such a phenomenal status seemed a world away for the teenage Juan, a 14-year-old lover of pop music who played guitar and wrote Paul McCartney-style tunes. "I didn't begin voice lessons until I was 17," he says. "I wanted to travel and enjoy a good level of music education, but it wasn't me who wanted to be an opera singer. I was led."

Solo recitals by Juan, such as this one at Symphony Hall, are rare events indeed; they offer his fans the chance to enjoy the magnificence of his voice in a truly intimate atmosphere. Vincenzo Scalera accompanies the great man on piano as he performs works by, among others, Rossini, Mozart, Puccini and Verdi.



## City Of London Sinfonia

Allington Hall, Shrewsbury School, Fri 17 February

With its mission to 'create dynamic, engaging and outstanding musical experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds', the City Of London Sinfonia this month touches down in Shrewsbury to perform as part of Shropshire Music Trust's 2016/17 season. The concert sees the ensemble exploring the work of 'the devil's own instrument' - the violin - along the way presenting a selection of Baroque virtuoso items, British and Appalachian folk fiddling and impassioned tango from Argentina.

The programme includes works by Vivaldi, Grainger, Piazzolla, Locatelli and Copland. The evening is brought to a close with a performance of Autumn from Vivaldi's The Four Seasons.

Award-winning folk fiddler Henry Webster and the highly rated banjo player Dan Walsh join in the fun.



## BBC Philharmonic

Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, Fri 10 February

Residing at the Corporation's Manchester home of Media City in Salford Quays, the BBC Philharmonic is no stranger to Stoke, regularly presenting Victoria Hall concertgoers with works from its impressive repertoire.

This latest concert sees conductor Jamie Phillips being joined by soloist Adam Walker for a programme that features Haydn's Symphony 100 (Military), Mozart's Flute Concerto No 1 and Sibelius's Symphony No 1.



# Paul Carrack

**talks fame, collaborations and keeping it in the family...**

He's performed around the world with the likes of Eric Clapton, Roger Waters and Ringo Starr; had major hits with Squeeze, Roxy Music and Mike + The Mechanics; done session work for The Pretenders and The Smiths; and had his songs recorded by Eagles, Diana Ross and more. Yet despite being one of the most revered musicians and best-loved singers in the biz, Paul Carrack is also among the most unassuming chaps you'll meet, brushing off his astonishing list of achievements with a Yorkshire down-to-earthness that 40-odd years in London have done nothing to undermine.

In a sense, it's not surprising. That 'golden voice' which you'll definitely have heard on tracks like Squeeze's *Tempted* and Mike + The Mechanics' *Over My Shoulder* has never brought him household-name status. But then, this is a man who's much more comfortable in his own household, jamming in his studio with his son. Nevertheless, over the years, he's deservedly built up a loyal following, and if you're lucky enough to catch him on stage in Stoke or Birmingham this year, you can expect to experience something truly special.

"I never wanted to be super famous," Carrack explains. "I can't think of anything worse, to be honest - other than being poor and skint, which I'm not either! This is a really good place to be - I've got my own little niche going, and every now

and then I get a treat, like going out on tour with Eric (Clapton), which has allowed me to play all over the world with some amazing musicians. But you couldn't have planned it. It's just hard work and getting on with the job."

Now divorced from obligations to the big-name bands he's spent half his career performing with, these days Carrack operates as his own mini-industry, doing almost all of the instrumentation on his solo records as well as producing them under his own label, Carrack UK - often only calling on his bandmates when it's time to hit the road.

"Every time I do an album this way, I always say I'll never do it again. It just takes too long! But I've got a little studio at home, and when I start out making an album, I don't usually have much to go on - I'll just have a few bits and bobs on my phone or something like that, and then I'll start developing it.

"I married a London girl, so I've been here most of my life now, but I'm originally from Sheffield, and the rest of my band still lives there - the only one knocking around is my son, Jack. But I've been in lots of bands and helped lots of people out over the years. I'm quite happy now just doing my own thing."

Since setting up his self-titled label in the late '90s, Carrack has independently produced a total of 18 solo albums.

Beginning with little experience of the wider business back in the days before social media had started to facilitate promotion was a bold step, but over the years, Carrack UK has steadily gained traction, with successive albums working their way into the charts.

"I think it was a really smart move, and I'm not particularly noted for my smart moves! I've really enjoyed it but it has been difficult. When I did the first one, I didn't have a clue how labels worked, but I'd had some not-so-great experiences with major record labels as a solo artist, and I could sense there was a shift in how the business was working - that things were contracting. I was lucky that my good friend Peter Van Hooke had a little more experience of how the nuts and bolts of it fitted together, and he was very helpful in getting it going. What's interesting now is that it seems to be a model that a lot of people are following."

Bonding time with Jack, who plays percussion in the band and on the albums, has also been an advantage of going it alone. "He's a chip off the old block! I've got four kids and all of the others have got proper jobs, but he's a bit like me. He hated school and we used to worry about it, but he's been touring with us for the last four or five years, so he's part of the furniture now, and it's been great - he's really blossomed."



Released in January 2016, Carrack's latest album, *Soul Shadows*, reached number 25 in the UK album charts as well as taking the number one spot in the Amazon soul charts. Almost all the tracks are original numbers by Carrack himself, but exceptions include a cover of the Alfred Braggs & Deadric Malone song, *Share Your Love With Me*. The song has been covered by various artists, including Aretha Franklin, Van Morrison and The Band, though it's with the Bobby Bland original that Carrack's version has the most in common.

There's also *Bet Your Life*, a melancholy ballad about a compulsive gambler, with lyrics penned by old friend and former Squeeze bandmate Chris Difford. In an album comprised mainly of love songs, it mightn't be the cheeriest choice, but according to Carrack, it's one that always goes down well in his live sets.

"The song's just kept growing, and it's one where the band gets to stretch out a bit at the end. We've got a great lead guitarist and sax player and it gives them a chance to show off."

Though he's already been touring the album during the year gone by, 2017 will mark Carrack's biggest solo tour to date, taking in major UK venues as well as a series of international stops, with solo acoustic support from singer-songwriter Sarah Munro.

Elsewhere, Carrack is keeping his fingers in other pies. As well as continuing as Eric Clapton's keyboardist, he's also recently been gigging with Clapton bandmate Andy Fairweather Low and long-term collaborator and fellow undersung industry stalwart Nick Lowe (with whom he wrote the Diana Ross hit, *Battlefield*). Last year, a mini-tour for the trio included a set at Shrewsbury Folk Festival.

"I love singing harmonies, and I've always had this idea at the back of my mind that I'd like to get together with those guys. I had a gig at the London Palladium the year before last, and the three of us decided to do four acoustic songs in the middle of the set. We had such fun rehearsing it, and when we did the show, it went down a storm, so we started doing a bit of recording at my place too. We did an album's-worth of stuff and then almost forgot about it, but apparently there's some interest from quite a major record label, so it might even see the light of day!"

More recently, he recorded a charity Christmas single with the London Hospices Choir, a 300-strong group of patients, staff and families from 17 different hospices who came together to mark the 125th anniversary of the Royal Trinity Hospice. When Mike + The Mechanics hit *The Living Years* was chosen for the project, producer James Hawkins invited Carrack to sing it with them.

"The whole project was well underway by the time I came in. I was kind of surprised they'd chosen the song, but they felt it was the perfect message for what they're about, which is, if you've got anything to say to someone, say it now while you still can. And it was great - they really enjoyed themselves and got a bit of media attention, including a couple of TV spots. It was the number one selling CD over Christmas, and though they obviously now take downloads into consideration for the charts, I think as far as the hospices were concerned it was a big success, because it did a lot to raise their profile, which then helps them in their other fundraising activities."

There is talk of a new Paul Carrack solo album being in the works, but with the 2017 tour kicking off in early February, it could be a few more months before it's ready for release.

"I've got about six or seven songs but it's not quite enough for an album yet, and with the tour, I'm not sure when I'll get to finish it, but hopefully we'll be putting out something later this year."

.....

**Paul Carrack plays Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, on Friday 17 February and Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Friday 17 and Saturday 18 March.**



## Josie Long

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Wed 15 February; The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham, Fri 17 February

Josie Long's award-winning comedian pal, Nish Kumar, has referred to her as 'the David Bowie of stand-up', a description he's used on account of the 34-year-old comic's impressive capacity for reinventing herself.

London-born Long admits she likes to change her way of doing things every now and again, and is currently engaged in the business of bringing a big dose of positivity to a post-Brexit nation.

Josie's very much a political animal, but recognises that banging on too much about politics is a near-certain way to alienate an audience. Hence the enthusiastic Remain'er's decision to focus on the bright side of life in this critically acclaimed touring show.

Jokes include: "When I was a kid, I asked my mum what a couple was and she said, 'Oh, two or three'. And she wonders why her marriage didn't work out..."

## Six of the best...

### Sean Lock

Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 27 - Tues 28 February

Although Sean Lock is best known from the Channel Four panel game 8 Out Of 10 Cats, on which he appeared as a team captain for 10 years, he's also picked up the odd gong or two for his stand-up, so a night in his company is always a surefire bet for a big barrel of laughs.

He's visiting Birmingham this month with his latest touring show, Keep It Light.

Jokes include: "So what if Jesus turned water into wine? I turned a whole student loan into Vodka once. Your move, Jesus..." and "I'm in therapy at the moment. I don't need it, obviously, but I got all these psychiatrist gift vouchers for Christmas which my family clubbed together for. What I wanted was a crossbow..."



### John Shuttleworth

Birmingham Town Hall, Sun 12 February; Stratford Artshouse, Stratford-upon-Avon, Fri 24 February

Midlands-based lovers of light comedy and understated but up-to-the-minute fashions here get the opportunity to enjoy an allegedly 'final' evening in the company of Sheffield's raconteur par excellence.

The pigeon-fancying Shuttleworth is the creation of actor Graham Fellows - a one-time chartbuster with 1970s hit Jilted John - and has been making his presence felt on the UK comedy circuit for more than 30 years.

Topics for Shuttleworth's consideration in this farewell offering include the rise in popularity of hi-viz protective wear, the suitability of the plastic lid on takeaway coffee cups, and the excitement he felt when sucking his first mint.



### Jen Brister

Artrix, Bromsgrove, Thurs 23 - Fri 24 February

Rising star Jen Brister says it's her mother who's to blame for her overwhelming need "to seek validation from a roomful of people in varying degrees of inebriation". When Jen was young, she reveals on her website, her mum would encourage her to do impressions in front of adults.

"All the while, my mum is watching me and beaming with pride," recalls Jen. "'Jennifer,' she'd say, 'you could be the next Meryl Streep!' 'Really, mum?' 'Oh yes, every actor starts with impressions! Just look at Dustin Hoffman. Tootsie is a very good film. He did an impression of a woman and his career took off!' 'I think he was famous before Tootsie, mum.' 'I don't think so - I think he put on a dress and, poof!, he was famous. You know... maybe if you wore a dress sometimes, Jennifer, you could get famous too...'" "At this stage in my career, I'm willing to try anything, so thanks, mum!"



## Justin Moorhouse

Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 10 February; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 19 February

Justin Moorhouse is a naturally and seriously funny stand-up - which isn't something that can be said about every comedian who picks up a mic and fires off an evening's-worth of material.

Audience members catching his act for the first time will find themselves in the company of a seasoned pro who knows exactly how to work a crowd.

Although his accent and style of delivery call to mind Peter Kay (no bad thing), Moorhouse is very much his own man, presenting an evening of well-honed, hugely enjoyable, adult-themed entertainment.

Jokes include: "The women you see on Jeremy Kyle are so big they have to get their leggings on prescription."



## Tanyalee Davis

The Bramall, Birmingham, Thurs 16 February

Tanyalee Davis is a three foot six inches tall comedian who's happy to make reference to her height as a starting point for her comedy. "Sometimes a kid sees me," she explains, "and says, 'Wow, what happened to you? Did you get into an accident?' And I say, 'Hell, no, I just didn't eat my vegetables when I was your age, you little shit!'"

Canadian-born Tanyalee, who describes herself as "the Ferrari of comedy - low to the ground and kinda racy", has been peddling her hugely successful brand of humour for over 20 years.

"A good majority of my act is about my life and me," she explains. "Maybe it's from a little person's perspective, but I don't feel it's hokey midget shit anymore. It's not just generic; it's really relevant to me and the situations I've gotten into."



## Richard Gadd

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Sun 19 February

It says much about Richard Gadd's talent that he was able to score a big success at last summer's Edinburgh Fringe with a stand-up show he'd felt compelled to write as a result of experiencing a sexual assault.

Managing to generate humour from so dark a starting point is no mean feat, and speaks volumes for the progress Gadd feels he's made since the incident changed his life five years ago.

"I'm the man playing football twice a week with my football pals," he explained to the Guardian. "I thought of myself as a man, and I felt like that was taken from me, and I'm ashamed of that now. But I felt like that was the story I wanted and I needed to tell with this show."



## Andy Zaltzman

The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton, Fri 24 February

Sporting a hairstyle that makes him look like Art Garfunkel on acid, Andrew Zaltzman is best known for performing comedy routines with a decidedly political bent.

A regular collaborator with John Oliver, Zaltzman's work with the Birmingham-born funnyman includes radio shows Political Animal and The Department, and satirical podcast The Bugle.

Jokes include, "Politicians are like God. No one believes in them, they haven't done anything for ages, and they give jobs to their immediate family."

Another gag is: "Sperms are communists; well, Stalinists really - only one of them gets to achieve anything and millions of them die for nothing."



## Thoroughly Modern Millie

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham,  
Mon 13 - Sat 18 February

Michelle Collins and Joanne Clifton star in this latest stage version of the hit 1967 film. Set in Manhattan during the Roaring '20s, the show tells the story of Millie Dillmount, a young woman who arrives in New York from Kansas in search of wealth, excitement and a man to marry.

Deciding to stay at the Hotel Priscilla, she meets its proprietor, the eccentric Mrs Meers, before embarking on a series of riotous and not altogether planned adventures, all of which are pleasingly punctuated by dazzling musical numbers and stunning dance routines.



## Amédée

The REP, Birmingham,  
Fri 24 February - Sat 11 March



Playwright, director and comedian Sean Foley, whose previous stage productions include *The Play What I Wrote* and *The Ladykillers*, is the man behind this new adaptation of Eugene Ionesco's 1954 work. A leading figure in French avant-garde theatre, Ionesco is best known for his absurdist plays, many of which reflect on the insignificance of human existence.

*Amédée*, his first full-length offering, features a frustrated playwright and his switchboard-operator wife. Struggling to make ends meet in a dilapidated London apartment (Foley's adaptation switches the action from Paris), the couple are becoming ever more concerned about the problem in their other room - a corpse that's causing mushrooms to sprout all over the apartment...

Roxana Silbert directs this Birmingham Repertory Theatre Company production.

## Dummy

The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham,  
Sat 18 February

As well as being performance partners, Los Angeles-based improv duo Colleen Doyle and Jason Shotts - aka *Dummy* - are also a

couple in real life. And there's little doubt that their romantic relationship lends their improv work a very particular and impressively easygoing chemistry. Colleen and Jason are appearing in Birmingham this month for one night only and will be keen to quickly work out what kind of audience they're performing to... "Different cities have different styles of improv," explains Jason. "For instance, in Chicago, we're almost expected to do a one-act play for which we don't know our lines. There are some cities where you sense pretty quickly that the audience has never seen a long-form improv show and so don't know how to react to it. By contrast, in cities with theatres, longform improv's easier because people are familiar with seeing plays so are more patient. It gives you more room to take risks."

## Wolf Meat

Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham,  
Sat 18 February

Blending macabre humour and theatrical anarchy with a healthy sense of the ridiculous is the name of the game for Wildheart & Lyric, a theatre company founded six years ago by a group of friends 'in a dusty pub function room'.

The ensemble's currently touring production scored a sell-out success at the Brighton Fringe in 2015, earning praise for its seriously fast-paced storytelling, clever physical comedy, and refreshing disregard for the invisible 'fourth wall' that usually separates performers from audience.

For those who like to know that their evening of comedy comes complete with an accompanying storyline, *Wolf Meat* takes place in the drugs den of a Gangsta Granny-style 'druglo-

rd' named Margaret, where Detective Dawn Taylor is determined that justice will triumph over dirty dealing. Scenes of nudity and violence make the suggested rating for this show 16-plus.

## The Goon Show

The Bear Pit Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon,  
Wed 8 - Fri 10 February; mac, Birmingham,  
Sat 11 February; Henry Tudor House,  
Shrewsbury, Sun 12 February

With fans down the decades having included The Beatles, Monty Python and Prince Charles, there's little doubting the impact which 1950s radio comedy programme *The Goon Show* has had on British culture and humour.

Featuring Spike Milligan, Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and, for a couple of series in the early '50s, Michael Bentine, the show ran for nine years, each half-hour episode providing a zany mixture of puns, catchphrases, bizarre sound effects and utterly ludicrous characters.

Birmingham Comedy Festival and Fred Theatre here present 21st century audiences with the opportunity to enjoy two classic *Goon Show* radio scripts live on stage: *The House Of Teeth* and *The Jet-Propelled Guided Naafi* were both originally broadcast in 1956.





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## Sister Act

Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, Mon 27 February - Sat 4 March; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 8 - Sat 13 May

Based on the hit Whoopi Goldberg movie, this stage musical, directed and choreographed by Craig Revel Horwood, sees Alexandra Burke taking the Goldberg role of Reno lounge singer Deloris Van Cartier. After seeing her gangster boyfriend kill an employee, Deloris is placed on a witness protection programme and hidden in a convent, where she takes over the rehearsals of the in-house choir of nuns. Thanks to her musical expertise, the choir become a huge success and church attendances go through the roof. But in giving the church a new lease of life, Deloris may inadvertently have jeopardised her own safety...

A fun-filled spectacular of a show with a real feelgood factor, this is a truly divine comedy that's well worth worshipping.



## California Scheming

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Sat 11 February

Writer, director and performer Clare Ferguson-Walker has earned plenty of praise for this spoken-word set, a presentation described as 'a poetic narrative about a life-long fascination with America'. When a family take a trip to California, they find themselves not only exposed to the gaudy excesses of life in Los Angeles, but also to the sobering realisation that all that glitters is not necessarily gold... This ultimately uplifting cautionary tale is 60 minutes in length and is performed without an interval.

## Wonderland

New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham, Mon 6 - Sat 11 February; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 10 - Sat 15 July

It was during the lifetime of the book's author, Lewis Carroll, that the wacky world of Alice's Adventures In Wonderland first made it onto the stage; in 1886, to be precise. A mere 17 years later, the topsy-turvy story and its cast of colourful characters were being interpreted through the exciting new medium of film.

One of the latest companies to join the long and noble tradition of reinventing Alice visits the Midlands this month. It's being led by Broadway composer Frank Wildhorn, whose work on shows like Jekyll & Hyde, Victor/Victoria and Bonnie & Clyde has earned him international acclaim. "It starts with the idea of the child within us

all," explains Frank about his new show. "The opening lyrics of my song, Finding Wonderland, are 'We move too fast; we miss so much'. And it's true - there's a Wonderland in all of our lives if we could only take a breath and notice it. In this particular adventure, Alice has to rescue her own child, and in doing so, she rediscovers the child within herself." Wendi Peters, Dave Willetts and Kerry Ellis star.



## Cyrano

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Fri 3 - Sat 25 February

Edmond Rostand's famous French play, written in 1897, recounts the story of Cyrano de Bergerac, a poet and soldier who's desperate to win the love of his brilliant and beautiful cousin, the Lady Roxane. Cyrano's best efforts to do so, however, are somewhat complicated by the fact that he's got a nose that's as big as the Eiffel Tower (that's obviously an exaggeration for effect, but you get the idea). Northern Broadsides and the New Vic Theatre join forces to present this swash-buckling tale of unrequited love.

## Northanger Abbey

Lichfield Garrick, Mon 13 - Wed 15 February

Jane Austen's classic satire is here adapted by highly rated playwright Tim Luscombe. It tells the story of the bookish Catherine Morland, a 17-year-old girl whose love of a 'horrid' novel helps fuel her imagination when she visits Northanger Abbey. The home of her beloved, the one-time church is a place in which Catherine soon finds fact and fiction colliding...

Luscombe's adaptation has met with plenty of positive reviews during the course of its UK tour, and promises an evening of rollicking fun for all fans of Austen's novels. Casting includes Emma Ballantine, Eva Feiler, Jonathan Hansler, Harry Livingstone, Joe Parker, Annabelle Terry, Hilary Tones and Joseph Tweedale.





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Maureen Nolan The Nolans  
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LET'S DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY



## The Full Monty

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,  
Mon 6 - Sat 11 February

When six men lose their jobs at the local steelworks, they find that dignity, hope and self-belief are suddenly in short supply. Until, that is, they take the plunge and become male strippers...

Ex-EastEnder Gary Lucy takes the lead role of Gaz in a show that features the music of Donna Summer, Hot Chocolate and Tom Jones.

"This may be a comedy, but the stories running through it are really strong, particularly

Gaz's," explains Gary. "He's feeling worthless because he doesn't have a job and might lose his son. His sole aim is to continue to see his boy, so he gets the guys together to make some money."

So how does Gary feel about getting naked at the end of the show? "It was quite a strange experience initially," he smiles, "but it's obviously a major part of the story. You have to make sure that you never fall out with the lighting guy, mind, as he's the one who makes sure the audience get blinded by the spotlights at the end and so don't see too much!"

## In The Motherhood

mac, Birmingham, Mon 6 February; Artrix, Bromsgrove, Fri 10 February; Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton, Thurs 16 February & Albany Theatre, Coventry, Sat 18 February



In the delightful village in which they live, Nita and Bonnie run the PTA with brutal efficiency. Savvy city type Jacs is looking to make an impression and wants to get involved - but on Nita and Bonnie's watch, joining the committee is no easy task...

"It was really important to me to write this play because I want to celebrate mums," says Hayley Pepler, who began work on *In The Motherhood* four years ago, when she was a participant in Birmingham Repertory Theatre's Write Away scheme for emerging playwrights. "I want to draw attention to the incredible job women are doing every day to raise the next generation in the face of enormous competing pressures about how we do it."

## Pygmalion

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry,  
Tues 28 February - Fri 3 March

George Bernard Shaw's classic offering tells the story of Professor Henry Higgins, an arrogant expert in phonetics who reckons he could teach any woman to speak properly. Enter, Eliza Dolittle - a young flower-seller

who's no great lover of pronouncing her aitches. But will Eliza prove a 'challenge too far' for the proper-speakin' professor, or can he manage to teach her enough to pass her off as a Duchess at the forthcoming Ambassador's Garden Party?

Based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *X, Pygmalion* debuted in 1914 and is widely considered to be one of the greatest plays of the 20th century. This innovative new staging - using video and sound technology to contemplate the issues of class identity and social mobility in modern Britain - is a co-production by Headlong, Nuffield Theatre and West Yorkshire Playhouse.

## La Strada

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry,  
Sat 11 - Sat 18 February; The REP,  
Birmingham, Mon 8 - Sat 13 May



A brand new stage adaptation of Federico Fellini's 1954 movie masterpiece, *La Strada* follows the journey of Gelsomina, a young woman who's effectively sold by her mother to a brutal and hard-drinking street performer named Zampano.

When the ill-matched pair come across an itinerant circus, Gelsomina finds herself faced with a stark choice that will decide the course of her future...

*La Strada* is being helmed by Sally Cookson, a director known for openly challenging gen-

der norms in productions like her gender-reversed *Sleeping Beauty*, her Wendy-centred *Peter Pan*, and a highly acclaimed adaptation of *Jane Eyre*.

"Gelsomina can certainly be seen as a victim," admits Sally, "but I'm determined that we find her 'action', if you like. The relationship between Zampano and Gelsomina is an abusive one, certainly, but Gelsomina doesn't just lie down and take it - she confronts him and questions and provokes all the way through the story. Like *Jane Eyre*, she's constantly looking for a better life and striving to discover her potential, but circumstances make that very difficult for her."

## Narvik

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Wed 15 -  
Thurs 16 February; mac, Birmingham,  
Sat 18 February

The story of a Liverpoolian man and a Norwegian woman who are 'pulled together and torn apart by war, as the events of one summer cause ripples across an ocean of time', *Narvik* started life as a 10-minute presentation. It was co-produced by Hannah Tyrrell Pinder from *Box Of Tricks*, the company now touring the show, and award-winning playwright and musician Lizzie Nunnery.

"We were really thrilled and surprised by the intense and positive response of the audience," explains Lizzie, in talking about that initial 10-minute version, "It felt like we'd hit on a really compelling central story. At that point, we knew our central character Jim, we knew it was a play about the disruption of war and memory, we knew it was, on some level, a romance. Beyond that, we wanted to tell a story about Norway, about the Arctic, and an unconventional journey through World War Two.

"I hope our Midlands audiences will find *Narvik* to be a really lively, thrilling experience. I can't wait!"

# theatre for younger audiences...



## Shark In The Park!

mac, Birmingham, Sun 5 February

Nick Sharratt has illustrated over 250 books, around one-sixth of which have been his own. One of these is the hugely successful *Shark In The Park!*, a children's story about a young lad named Timothy who goes to his local park to try out his new telescope. While there, he thinks he spots a shark - and not just on one occasion either, but several times in several places!

The popularity of the book prompted Sharratt to write and illustrate two follow-ups - *Shark In The Dark!* and *Shark In The Park On A Windy Day!*.

All three stories are featured in this brand new stage show from the highly rated Nonsense Room theatre company. The production is being performed three times during the afternoon and is suitable for children aged two-plus.

## Heaven Eyes

Old Rep, Birmingham, Thurs 16 February

This Théâtre Sans Frontières production of David Almond's play has garnered plenty of praise on its travels over the last few months. It tells the story of three teenagers who run away from an orphanage and sail down the River Tyne on a makeshift raft. In the course of their journey they encounter two somewhat curious characters. One is an enigmatic old man known as Grampa; the other, a strange Swedish girl called Heaven Eyes. Both end up playing a significant role in the teenagers' lives, as the three friends attempt to find their way in an increasingly confusing world.

The show is suitable for audience members aged nine and older.

## Wendy And Peter Pan

Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock, Thurs 16 - Fri 17 February

Faced with the crippling loss of her younger brother Tom, and convinced that his shadow still haunts her window, Wendy's heroic quest to salvage what remains of her parents'



marriage begins when the mercurial figure of Peter Pan arrives in her nursery one night... Local theatre company Split Mask here present their version of Ella Hickson's play, an adaptation of the JM Barrie classic that showed at the Royal Shakespeare Company a few Christmases ago.

## Jack Frost

The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire, Sat 25 February

Jack Frost's rather unwanted ability to freeze everything with which he comes into contact may well be wreaking havoc in the village, but that doesn't stop a small girl from reaching out to him with an offer of greatly needed friendship...

This much-loved Nordic legend about a traditionally sprite-like character - and the icy impact which he has on everything that he touches - is here reimagined by the talented theatricals of Moon On A Stick. The Norfolk-based company bring to life this chilly little tale via an engaging mixture of puppetry, music and playful storytelling, presenting a lively production that's suitable for youngsters aged three-plus.

## The Quite Remarkable Adventures Of The Owl And The Pussycat

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sat 18 February - Sat 4 March

A musical adaptation of a book written by Monty Python star Eric Idle, *The Quite Remarkable Adventures Of The Owl And The Pussycat* is inspired by the famous Edward Lear poem. The story sees its two main characters, the owl and the pussycat of the title, heading out on a mission to save the world. In the process they must defeat the dastardly Firelord, his imaginary dragon, Pyron, and his henchmen, Flicker and Brimstone. "I love the Belgrade Theatre," says Idle. "It's where we first performed Monty Python live on stage in January 1970 for three sold-out midnight shows. It's very close to where we opened my play, *Pass The Butler*, in 1982, and it's totally where *The Quite Remarkable*



*Adventures Of The Owl And The Pussycat* will be sailing into the spotlight, to bring more nonsense to Coventry."

## Michael Morpurgo's King Arthur

The Core Theatre, Solihull, Tues 21 February

The award-winning Story Pocket Theatre here presents its touring adaptation of War Horse author Michael Morpurgo's 2008 novel about the legend of King Arthur. One of the UK's leading theatre companies for younger audiences, the Guildford-based ensemble, of which Morpurgo is patron, bring both classic and original children's stories to the stage. This latest offering sees a drowning boy being rescued by a mysterious figure who claims to be Arthur Pendragon. As the old man recounts his tales, the youngster is transported back to the heady days of Camelot, the Round Table, Merlin, Excalibur, Lancelot and Guinevere - a mythical time of magic, heroism, love and betrayal. Blending physical theatre and imaginative storytelling to create a fast-moving family adventure, the production is suitable for children aged seven and older.



# Billy Elliot

## West End phenomenon pirouettes into Birmingham Hippodrome

On 3 March 1985, the longest industrial strike in British history was finally brought to an exhausted end. For 12 months, thousands of miners across the country had refused to work, in protest against the planned closure of UK collieries. Over the course of the year, the dispute became increasingly bitter, with frequent outbreaks of violence and families struggling to keep themselves financially afloat. But despite its unprecedented scale, the strike ultimately failed - a historic outcome seen by many as signalling the end of an era.

Set against this backdrop of confrontation, abject poverty and dashed hope is the story of Billy Elliot - a young boy with an unexpected talent for ballet whose family is at the heart of the conflict in County Durham.

Coming to Birmingham Hippodrome next month as part of its first ever UK tour, the smash-hit stage musical shows how Billy's abilities offer him a lifeline out of the world he's been born into. Sadly, the rest of his family and community are not so lucky.

"It's easy to look back on it all now and feel like you know the outcome, but when you're doing this show, it's important not to look at it in the past tense," says Scott Garnham, who plays Billy's older brother and local strike ringleader Tony. "No union strike had ever lost like this before, so when Tony goes out there, he really

believes that they're going to win."

It's this confidence in solidarity that makes the play's final revelation so utterly devastating. By the time we get to the end of the story, Tony is explaining to Billy that while he goes off to complete his dance training, everyone he knows in Easington and beyond will soon be unemployed.

At the centre of Billy Elliot is the simple tale of a little boy chasing his dream, and since the film first appeared in 2000, it's been widely credited with helping to change attitudes towards dance, giving hundreds of boys access to a previously unthought-of world and driving up standards for male dancers throughout the industry.

But there's another, arguably even more poignant, side to the story, one that's concerned with the transition from an age of nationalised industry and community solidarity into Margaret Thatcher's vision of an individualistic world in which "There is no such thing as society".

"There are sort of two different stories about trying to overcome adversity," Garnham explains, "one about a little boy trying to escape his environment, and one about the strike. And where one succeeds, the other fails spectacularly. When we go to places near mining communities, I feel like they really get what we're trying to say with our story. In Sunderland, you

could see fully grown men crying in the audience when we talked about how there'll be no pits left in 10 years' time."

Amazingly, over a decade after the musical made its stage debut, the current tour marks the first time it has moved out of the West End to visit the areas whose history it concerns.

"We were so nervous before we went to Sunderland, but it was the most amazing experience, a real career highlight. Even though this is their story, it hasn't been back there since they filmed the movie more than 15 years ago. We actually went to the Easington Town Hall, where a lot of our show is set, and met some of the people, and it's amazing the effect it still has there - even now there's still places where the people who broke the strike can't go. Then, on the opening night, we had the Easington Colliery Brass Band playing outside the theatre, which was a really nice, heartfelt moment."

Far from seeming frivolous, in many ways the musical version has an even greater, more immediate impact than the film. On stage, the clashes between miners and police are brought vividly to life.

"There are similarities obviously, but we're not trying to put the film on stage. This is very much its own thing. I think particularly the story of me and my dad is much more prominent in the musical. Also, whereas in the film Billy is the only



character who dances, in the musical, it's all about showing a distinction between the ways in which different characters move. So the choreography for the policemen and the miners has got its own language if you like, which is in contrast to the very heightened choreography for Billy."

Although it's stylised, the violence is viscerally felt, the child's perspective instilling a sense of real fear. At times, the rioting surrounds Mrs Wilkinson's ballet classes, threatening to crash down on the safe space that Billy has found for himself. Elsewhere, armour-clad officers stomp towards him with riot shields and truncheons raised, seeming to embody the oppressive atmosphere that's constantly threatening to push him over the edge.

All this isn't to dismiss the show's more straightforward pleasures. When Billy performs at his audition before an unreadable panel (a role in which the audience is cast through clever staging), we share wholeheartedly in his father's tearful pride and wonder. Meanwhile, Billy's less-than-eager foray into crossdressing with his fearlessly flamboyant best friend, Michael, is both heartwarming and hilarious - the dancing dresses, flashing lights and sparkly backdrops in Expressing Yourself provide one of the show's most spectacular moments. And then there's the beautiful

dream ballet, where Billy literally soars above the sadness of the world around him, in a gorgeous duet with his older self, as played by Luke Cinque-White.

Yet even this can be seen as part of the bigger picture of social change over the last few decades. The growing acceptance of unconventional characters like Billy and Michael hints at the burgeoning culture of individual expression and liberal social values that the '80s ushered in. In different times, perhaps Tony and his father would not only have been more accepting of Billy's choices, but even better equipped to deal with their own frustrations.

"Sometimes people watching the show forget that it was such a different time in 1984," says Garnham, "and that this little boy saying he wants to go off and be a ballet dancer would be like saying you want to go off into space and live with the aliens now. I think there was one review that described Tony as the villain of the piece, and I felt a bit like they hadn't really understood, whereas when you go to Sunderland or somewhere like that, they understand that there are no villains - other than maybe Margaret Thatcher!

"On the surface Tony isn't the nicest brother to Billy, but I think it comes out of a place of actually really caring. He does love Billy, but he's quite hot-headed and rash, and maybe not as in touch with his emotions as men are able to be now. He's

passionate, and that tends to come out in anger. But even though he and Billy seem very different, I think that actually, if you look a bit deeper, there are a lot of similarities between them."

For Garnham and the rest of the cast, the affection is unfeigned. Since the show began its tour a year ago, the five boys sharing the demanding title role - Adam Abbou, Emile Gooding, Matthew Lyons, Haydn May and Lewis Smallman - have grown a lot, both as performers and as people.

"When we started our rehearsals, some of them were quite timid, and although they're all fantastically talented, they each excelled at different things. Now it's virtually impossible to say who's the better dancer or singer or whatever, and they're all really confident and able to hold their own in conversations. The amount of discipline that's required for the role is incredible - I can't think of any other musical with a part like this. But I do feel like we're all one big family and we all look after each other, from the kids to the oldest cast members."

.....  
**Billy Elliot shows at Birmingham Hippodrome from Tuesday 7 March to Saturday 29 April**

# ONE LOVE

**New Bob Marley musical makes its UK debut in Birmingham**



On 3 December 1976, two days before performing in Kingston's Smile Jamaica concert, Bob Marley, his wife and his manager were wounded in an assassination attempt by unknown gunmen who invaded Marley's home. The attack prompted the singer to leave the country before the end of the year, spending a month in the Bahamas before heading for England. It was here that, over the next two years, he would record the albums *Exodus* and *Kaya*, featuring iconic singles such as *One Love*, *Jamming* and *Is This Love*.

Set against a backdrop of violence and corruption in Jamaica and wider Cold War conflict across the world, this period of self-imposed exile serves as the basis for Kwame Kwei-Armah's *One Love: The Bob Marley Musical*, making its UK debut at Birmingham REP next month. Speaking to us from Centre Stage in Baltimore, where he's currently artistic director, the acclaimed British playwright, actor and director told us more about the show.

"The story actually starts about 10 years ago," Kwei-Armah recalls, "when I was approached by Island Records to write a piece using Bob Marley's music but not his story. So I wrote that, it did the rounds, and everyone said, 'That's great, but where's Bob?' So about two-and-a-half years ago, they contacted me again with the rights to use his life story. I chose as my starting point the years between 1976 and '78 because I wanted to look at the hero's journey - what made him the great man that he was, not just because of his music but because of his choices in life."

A pacifist who actively cultivated a politically neutral public profile and frequently spoke out against the bloodshed in his country, Marley nevertheless found

himself embroiled in both domestic and international conflict, targeted by those who saw him as a supporter of Michael Manley's socialist government. At the time, Western anxiety over the 'red tide' of communism was still running high, and the government's agenda was viewed with suspicion by many at home as well as abroad.

Thanks to Marlon James' Man Booker Prize-winning novel, *A Brief History Of Seven Killings*, interest in Marley's relationship with this period of Jamaican history has recently been rekindled, but what's unique about this show is how closely Kwei-Armah has worked with the Marley family and record label, providing him with unprecedented access to the personal stories behind the public persona.

"It's been wonderful but also pretty daunting. I spoke to many people in Bob Marley's life and tried to use a lot of dialogue how they described it. I sent drafts of the script to the family. Luckily, they've been very helpful - all the criticism has been very constructive. They've allowed me to adapt the story and take artistic licence where I've needed, to change things to make the story work."

Kwei-Armah is now an ardent and long-term admirer of Marley's work, but interestingly, this hasn't always been the case. As a teenager, he was more interested in soul music, reggae being more to his sister's tastes.

"It was partly just sibling rivalry, but though it sounds like madness now, it was actually a big thing at the time. In the black community when I was a child, you made a choice at about 12 years old whether you were going to be into reggae or American soul. If you liked reggae, that meant that you were rooted and cultured, and if you liked soul that meant you weren't really culturally conscious. It wasn't until I was about 19 that I heard *Redemption Song*, for what must have been about the 1500th time, but for me, it was really like the first time. At that moment, I just understood what he was saying, and from there he grew to become

my own personal poet laureate."

Years later, however, Kwei-Armah is still discovering new things about his hero as he digs deep into the details of Marley's fascinating life.

"One of the things I didn't really know before was that he was a very quiet man. And of course we know that he was deeply religious, but I think just quite how dedicated he was to his faith was an interesting thing for me to learn. I was also surprised by how many people in Jamaica really relied on him. He was like an industry, and not just musically. I mean, there were actually people lining up at his house, waiting to be given money. That was quite a humbling thing to read."

Writing the story is one thing; attempting to adequately represent such an iconic figure live on stage is quite another, and in some respects, the weight of expectation on singer and musician Mitchell Brunings, who plays the lead, is even greater than that on the writer and director of the show.

"Casting is always the hardest part of any show, and I think we were quite fortunate that I came across Mitchell on the internet. This is his first time acting, so it's been really interesting helping him develop the skills to carry a character like this, but when he sings - you just close your eyes and think of Bob..."

Under its original title, *Marley*, the show premiered in 2015 at Baltimore's Center Stage theatre. But though it was popular and warmly received in the US, the version coming to Birmingham this year will be dramatically different.

"I would say there have been fundamental changes. We've used that first production to learn lessons and have taken the time to tell a much deeper and more complex story."

Following the huge success of plays like *Elmina's Kitchen* and *Fix Up* (both directed by Angus Jackson), exploring the lives of immigrant communities in the UK, the London-born writer soon became one

of the most prominent and respected voices in black British theatre. Now he's taken his stories overseas - it's about five-and-a-half years since he became resident in the US after taking up his post at Center Stage.

"I think we're looking at a beautiful time in America for new writing, both in television and in theatre. It's a kind of golden moment, so I'm really pleased to be in America as an artistic director whilst the quality of the work is so good structurally and politically."

Both Kwei-Armah and Marley's daughter, Cedella, are thrilled to be bringing the show to Birmingham, which the latter describes as a "natural place for its UK premiere" thanks to its "great mix of cultures". In particular, she says, she's looking forward to introducing her father's story to a new generation, some of whom weren't yet born during his lifetime. Arguably, the mythology of Marley has rather overtaken the man behind it. These days, his image has become ubiquitous, plastered across a dazzling array of merchandise and increasingly disconnected from who he was and what he stood for. But Kwei-Armah maintains that Marley is as important now as he's ever been, and that as long as people come to see the show, they won't fail to be moved by his music and his message.

"Wherever I've travelled in the world, I don't think I've landed on any continent where I haven't seen some young person wearing a Bob Marley t-shirt, and I think his image and his lyrics are still political. He is the voice of the oppressed and the downtrodden. I think people will see that this isn't just a story about a vintage star - it's about a man who stood for something and whose music made a difference to people's lives. And I think that, between our Brexit Britain and our Trump America, that's something that we really need."

.....  
**One Love: The Bob Marley Musical shows at The REP, Birmingham, from Friday 10 March to Saturday 8 April.**

# ANGUS JACKSON

## adds contemporary styling to Shakespeare's Ancient Rome

The 30th of June 2016: Just days after the EU referendum, Boris Johnson shocked the nation by announcing that he would not be standing for leadership of his party. In a speech, he described this as “a time not to fight against the tide of history but to take that tide at the flood and sail on to fortune.” Lifted almost verbatim from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, the quote hints tantalisingly at a story of betrayal and power play going on behind the scenes of the EU debate. It was an astonishing week in British history, but perhaps what is even more remarkable is the fact that it could be understood and interpreted through a reference to a 400-year-old play telling the story of 2000-year-old events.

Currently scrutinising *Julius Caesar* and its meaning for modern audiences is Angus Jackson, director of the RSC's forthcoming Rome season. This year, with the help of two other directors, Jackson is in charge of staging all four of Shakespeare's Roman plays, alongside a series of talks about their contemporary relevance, and an exhibition of political cartoons from the last 200 years that have used Shakespeare as a basis for satire.

“I think it's extraordinary that these truths run through history like the lettering through a stick of rock,” says Jackson. “They resonate across the ages: every time anybody says, 'Et tu, Brute?' we know what they mean, and every overly powerful individual is viewed through the lens of Caesar.”

Of the four plays, Jackson (whose previous RSC credits include *Oppenheimer* and *Don Quixote*) will direct the first and last of the season, with Iqbal Khan (*Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing*) heading up *Antony And Cleopatra*, and Blanche McIntyre (*Two Noble Kinsmen*) leading *Titus Andronicus*. Though it's neither the first Shakespeare wrote nor the first in terms of chronological setting, *Julius Caesar* seemed like the obvious choice to start the season - beginning, aptly enough, around the Ides of March.

“Interestingly when we go to London we will actually be opening with *Coriolanus*, so there they'll be in chronological order, but I rather like what we're doing in Stratford. I thought it would be a good idea to open with my own production of *Julius Caesar*, and we wanted to tie that together with *Antony And Cleopatra*, so we're opening with this big, epic story across those two plays; and then to do the next one (*Titus Andronicus*) further in the future made sense. That's going to be really exciting and bloody, and then, when we've laid waste to this empire, we go back to the beginning (in *Coriolanus*) and show you how it started with the best of intentions, before personalities and ambitions got in the way.”

Personal ambition, rabble rousing and populist uprising are at the heart of *Julius Caesar*'s thrilling political plot, which throws the conflicted idealism of Brutus

up against the confident, smooth-talking opportunism of Mark Antony. Where Antony wins over the mob through appeal to emotion, loyalty and sheer strength of personality, Brutus makes the fatal mistake of assuming that good intentions will be sufficient to make his case. It's a pertinent predicament to our own tumultuous times, where polls mislead and every argument is laden with highly charged language.

“Rhetoric is the most brilliant thing to talk about with this play, especially right after Trump takes over from Obama. We've just had the most extraordinary rhetorician as President of America, and if you compare the way he speaks to the way Trump speaks, it's really interesting. I might also argue that the Brexit debate was swayed enormously by rhetoric, and that only after the vote did people really start filtering through the facts.”

Ironically, in attempting to secure his beloved republic from the threat of dictatorship, Brutus ends up creating a power vacuum which is filled by exactly the kind of absolute government that he feared - a story we've seen playing out again and again throughout the ages, most recently in Middle Eastern states. The fate of the country hangs in the balance, and Brutus' catastrophic failure ushers in a new era for Rome: here the Republic ends and the Empire begins.

Today, Classical history is rarely taught in-





Photo: Catherine Ashmore

depth in schools, and it's common to treat the Roman era as a single, easily digestible unit, forgetting that it actually covers a period of about 1000 years. To put that in context, it's about as long as a unified English (let alone British) kingdom has existed today – so the Romans of *Coriolanus* would have had about as much in common with the Romans of *Titus Andronicus* as 21st-century Brits have with the Anglo-Saxons. With the help of designer Robert Innes Hopkins, Jackson hopes to emphasise that rolling on of centuries between the plays.

“We thought we'd start with a kind of modern version of Rome, the idea being to give them an environment that will look to our eye now as it would have looked to them at the time. So it's got all the pillars and the steps and the togas, but rather than having cumbersome, heritage clothing and weapons, we've got people tearing around in garments they can wear in a very practical way. Then in *Antony and Cleopatra*, that very modern-seeming world comes into collision with the beautiful, rich, ancient society of Egypt.

“By the time we get to *Titus*, which is hundreds of years and hundreds of emperors later, it will all be in modern dress, with things like severed heads in Tesco carrier bags. That fits in beautifully with the overarching season, because it's like this empire has evolved and decayed and become more complex and cruel, and it's difficult to know who's really in charge. Then after we've laid waste to it

all we go back and do *Coriolanus* in really deep period, where they're slugging out in the mud with broadswords and it's all about how much muscle you've got.”

Cutting edge music from the likes of Laura Mvula and Mira Calix will help to open up the characters' emotional and imaginative worlds to contemporary audiences.

“If HBO and Netflix have taught us anything, it's that you can get people really interested in historical figures if you shine the light on the people and what they thought and felt. Having a moment of emotion supported by something you might hear at the Mercury Awards today immediately tells the audience that these are people that think like they do.”

Following the phenomenal success of last year's Shakespeare 400 anniversary celebrations, the Roman season was conceived by RSC Artistic Director Greg Doran partly as a way of marking 2000 years since the death of Ovid. In a sense, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were to Shakespeare as Shakespeare's stories are to us: in the same way as Boris Johnson can describe post-Brexit machinations using *Julius Caesar*, so the tortured Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* turns to the story of *Philomel* to explain the horrors she endures.

Though best known for directing new writing (including plays by Kwame Kwei-Armah), for Jackson, who grew up in Birmingham, working at the RSC is like a

sort of homecoming.

“It's funny - I just saw Simon Russell Beale playing *Prospero* in *The Tempest*, and I can remember seeing him in Nick Hytner's production when I can't remember being much older than 12. My parents always brought me when I was a kid, and as soon as I got my driving licence, I would just go off by myself and see any number of shows in Stratford, so I feel incredibly comfortable there.”

“I think when you're putting on Shakespeare, if you're too reverent to do anything new with it, you end up with something that can come over a bit academic, which has its own validity, but I'm big on narrative and dramaturgy and making things fresh and interesting. As a new writing director, you treat the play like it's just been written, and I think that's the best way to approach any play - Shakespeare, Marlowe, Beckett or Brecht.”

.....

**The RSC's Rome season at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, commences with *Julius Caesar*, which shows from 3 March to 9 September. The season then continues with *Antony And Cleopatra*, 11 March - 7 September, and *Titus Andronicus*, 23 June – 2 September. Dates for *Coriolanus* are yet to be announced.**

Arthur Pita & HeadSpaceDance

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## The Red Shoes

Birmingham Hippodrome,  
Tues 7 - Sat 11 February &  
Wed 19 - Sat 22 July

Widely regarded as the greatest dance film ever made, *The Red Shoes* is inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's fairytale about a pair of enchanted shoes that force their wearer to dance until she dies.

The film's story centres on young ballerina and star in the making Vicky Page. When Vicky falls for the ballet company's charismatic composer, Julian Craster, the jealous Lermontov forces her to choose between love and her career, knowing full well that for Vicky, dancing is as much a necessity as living. In a sumptuous new adaptation visiting Birmingham this month, and returning in July, Matthew Bourne reinvents the movie's story live on stage.

"We have several little ballets in the piece," reveals Matthew. "There's a beach ballet, which creates a link to the actual beach when they visit Monte Carlo. We also have what we call the 'Good vs Evil' ballet, which reflects the atmosphere of what's going on in the story at that point. That's based on a famously barefoot ballet Frederick Ashton did called *Dante's Sonata*. We also do a bit of *Les Sylphides*, and then there's a big, grand, glamorous, waltzy ballet near the beginning to represent the world Vicky wants to be a part of.

"So it's almost like watching a bit of dance history - you can see all the references."



## James Wilton Dance: Leviathan

mac, Birmingham, Fri 24 February

Be careful what you fish for...

Award-winning choreographer James Wilton here re-imagines the seminal novel, *Moby Dick*. Wilton takes on the lead role of Captain Ahab, a man hell-bent on capturing the legendary white whale of the title, and brilliantly leads a troupe of highly talented dancers through the increasingly choppy waters of Herman Melville's epic story.

Wilton's choreography is always distinctive, his productions powered by an energy the audience can almost reach out and touch. *Leviathan* is widely considered to be the choreographer's best and most finely tuned work to date.

In short, this is one whale of a tale that no self-respecting dance enthusiast can afford to miss...

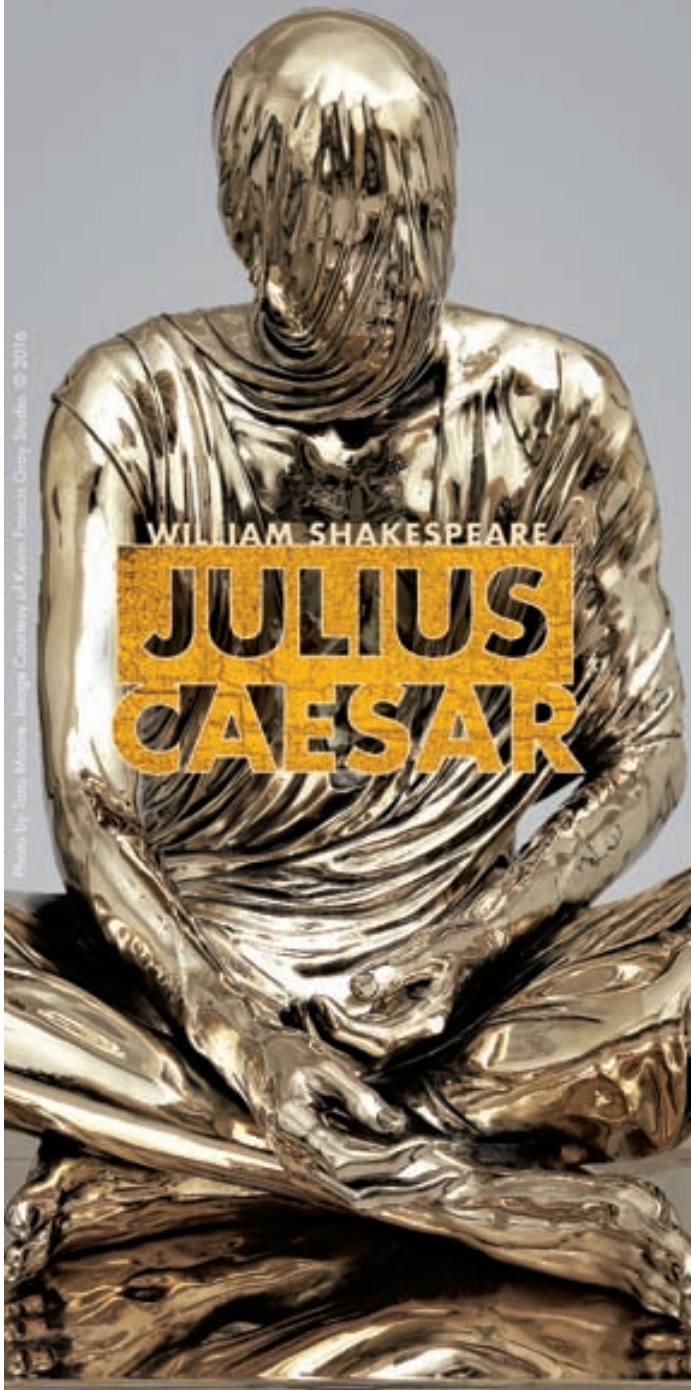


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### Stepmother/Stepfather

DanceXchange, The Patrick Centre, Birmingham Hippodrome, Thurs 16 - Fri 17 February

Award-winning director and choreographer Arthur Pita dances over to the dark side with this latest double bill, produced in collaboration with HeadSpaceDance.

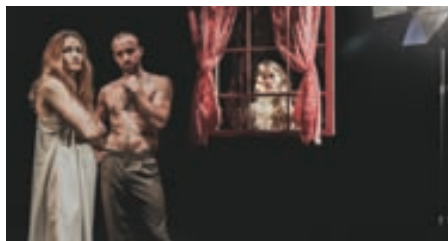
In the first piece, familiar fairytale characters including Snow White and Hansel & Gretel find themselves being pursued by 'a force of monstrous and abusive stepmothers'.

The second dancework, meanwhile, entices the audience into 'a hellish world of incest and murder'. The grisly tale it recounts is inspired by the Country Death Song, a folk-punk track from the second album of long-established cult American band Violent Femmes.



### National Dance Company Wales

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Tues 21 February



This is National Dance Company Wales' first visit to Theatre Severn for five long years. As if to make up for lost time, the talented ensemble is presenting not one but three brand new pieces to its Shropshire audience... Profundis is a provocative piece accompanied by whimsical wordplay and an exotic soundtrack.

Tuplet, meanwhile, is described by the company as 'a witty and high-octane exploration of the simple notion of rhythm'.

The triple bill is completed by The Green House, an imaginative work in which, on a twisted TV set, characters discover 'the fine line between fantasy and reality'.

### Matthew Bourne's Early Adventures

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 16 - Sat 18 February

Given the number of awards he's won since bursting onto the dance scene way back in the mid-1980s, Matthew Bourne is a man with a need for a seriously big mantelpiece, if not a dedicated trophy room. Backed by the talented members of his company, choreographer Bourne has scored

some impressive theatrical hits across the decades, most famously an all-male version of Swan Lake. But before he really hit the big time, Matthew enjoyed numerous quieter successes with a number of highly innovative danceworks, some of which are featured in this celebratory show.

The programme, here presented by Bourne's New Adventures company, varies from performance to performance and is drawn from four pieces: The Infernal Galop, Town And Country, Spitfire and Watch With Mother.



### Cinderella

Birmingham Hippodrome, Wed 15 - Sat 25 February

Created seven years ago, Birmingham Royal Ballet's highly regarded version of Cinderella is a beautiful and majestic work.

The company's director, David Bintley, pulls together the various elements of the classic fairytale with some impressively articulate storytelling.

The show's choreography is dramatic and bold, its grand waltzes featuring among a host of truly magical moments.

Fans of the piece will undoubtedly be happy to revisit it, newcomers delighted by what they discover.

### Coppelia

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 7 February & Malvern Theatre, Mon 13 February

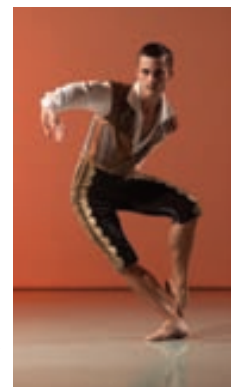
Since its formation in 1981, the Russian State Ballet of Siberia has built a fine reputation for its delivery of world-renowned classics. This month sees the company returning to Wolverhampton to present a show that brings together Leo Delibes' dazzling score with some truly breathtaking choreography. When Dr Coppélius's mannequin, Coppelia, is left on the workshop balcony, she causes quite a stir - not only in the heart of the red-blooded Franz but also in the mind of his jealous fiancée, Swanilda, who foolishly mistakes Coppelia for a flesh-and-blood rival...

### Richard Alston Dance

Malvern Theatre, Tues 28 February - Wed 1 March

A choreographer who's very much at the forefront of contemporary dance in the UK, Richard Alston takes inspiration directly from the music he uses.

This month sees his highly rated company returning to the Midlands to perform a programme which includes two dances to piano pieces that originate from completely different worlds. Both are brand new works, by Alston and Martin Lawrance, and are accompanied live on stage by pianist Jason Ridgway.



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## Film

### Moonlight CERT 15 tbc

Starring **Trevante Rhodes, André Holland, Janelle Monáe, Ashton Sanders, Jharrel Jerome, Naomie Harris, Mahershala Ali** Directed by **Barry Jenkins (USA)**

You don't come across a film like *Moonlight* very often. Not only does it exhibit a very distinctive directorial style but a narrative that matches it for originality. Set on the mean streets of Miami, the film focuses on one individual, Chiron. Chiron doesn't speak much but digests the world around him - which is not a nice place. His mother is a crack-smoking prostitute, his saviour a drug dealer and his best friend somebody he shouldn't really trust...

Director Barry Jenkins divides his film into three parts, each revealing a different aspect of our protagonist, titled 'Little,' 'Chiron' and 'Black.' As such, it is a fictitious biography of a black man and how he comes to be who he is. Here there are good people who do bad things and bad people who do good things. The performances are excellent across the board, although as Chiron's mother - as much a victim as her son - Naomie Harris is terrific. On the evidence here, it's hard to believe the actress ever played Miss Money Penny. The film itself won the Golden Globe for best drama.

**Released Fri 17 February**



CRITIC'S CHOICE

### Film highlights released in February...



### Gold CERT tbc

Starring **Matthew McConaughey, Édgar Ramírez, Bryce Dallas Howard, Corey Stoll, Toby Kebbell, Craig T. Nelson** Directed by **Stephen Gaghan (USA)**

When the Canadian company Bre-X Minerals announced that it was sitting on a huge gold reserve in the jungles of Borneo, its stock price rocketed. So a luckless businessman and a geologist team up to go a-hunting.

**Released Fri 3 February**



### Resident Evil: The Final Chapter

CERT 15 (106 mins)

Starring **Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter, Shawn Roberts, Ruby Rose, Iain Glen** Directed by **Paul WS Anderson (UK/USA/Germany/Canada/France/Australia)**

Alice (Jovovich) would appear to be one of the last humans alive on earth, so has her work cut out for her in her battle against the armies of the undead.

The sixth and supposedly final instalment in the franchise based on the video game. In 3D.

**Released Fri 3 February**

### T2 Trainspotting CERT tbc

Starring **Ewan McGregor, Ewen Bremner, Jonny Lee Miller, Robert Carlyle, Kelly Macdonald** Directed by **Danny Boyle (UK)**

Danny Boyle made his name with *Trainspotting* back in 1996 and since then has gone from strength to strength. Here he unites the original cast with a script adapted from Irvine Welsh's *Porno*, which sees the old miscreants reunited in Scotland just as Begbie (Robert Carlyle) has been released from prison. Choose your future. Choose life.

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## Film

### Loving CERT 12a (123 mins)

Starring **Joel Edgerton, Ruth Negga, Nick Kroll, Michael Shannon, Marton Csokas**  
Directed by **Jeff Nichols (USA)**

Another true-life drama about the horrors of racism in the American South, Nichols' understated film focuses on Richard and Mildred Loving, a couple who had the audacity to share a bed. Even though they were legally married, Richard was white and Mildred was black and in Virginia that meant prison. Joel Edgerton, who can apparently play anything, blends chameleon-like into Richard, a socially awkward bricklayer who sees no harm in marrying the most beautiful woman in his small community. As Mildred, Ruth Negga - an Irish-Ethiopian actress - commands every scene she's in, growing from a shy and timid wallflower into the public voice of her family's cause.

**Released Fri 3 February**



**CRITIC'S CHOICE**

### Toni Erdmann

CERT 15 (162 mins)

Starring **Peter Simonischek, Sandra Hüller, Trystan Pütter, Lucy Russell**  
Directed by **Maren Ade (Germany/Austria)**

Winner of innumerable awards and a Bafta and Golden Globe nominee for best foreign language film, Toni Erdmann is an unusual beast. Indeed, Maren Ade's third feature pulls off a number of tricks. Opening in a nondescript suburb of Germany, her film tells of a lonely divorcee (Simonischek) in the autumnal years of his life. Without so much as a note of music or a caption or a whisper of exposition, Ade spins her tale in her own

sweet time, creating a small, slightly musty world which, in spite of everything, feels entirely plausible. Yet as we follow the life of this odd, old man, the spectre of the bizarre hovers at the door throughout the film's 162 minutes. And because the events are so thoroughly unpredictable, Ade manages to hold the rapt attention of her audience – without ever betraying the credibility of her scenario. Consequently, the viewer is at a loss whether to sob or to roar with laughter. In short, Ade pulls off an extraordinary balancing act, producing a surreal black comedy rooted in real life.

**Released Fri 3 February**

### Rings CERT 15 (102 mins)

Starring **Matilda Lutz, Alex Roe, Johnny Galecki, Vincent D'Onofrio**  
Directed by **F Javier Gutiérrez (USA)**

When Julia (Lutz) watches that damned video, she discovers a new horrifying truth: there is another movie within the movie... A sequel to The Ring and The Ring Two, which were themselves remakes of the Japanese original (1998).

**Released Fri 3 February**



### Fifty Shades Darker CERT tbc

Starring **Dakota Johnson, Jamie Dornan, Kim Basinger, Luke Grimes, Hugh Dancy**  
Directed by **James Foley (USA)**

A sequel to you-know-what, FSD follows Anastasia Steele and Christian Grey as they re-draw the boundaries of their relationship. Then Christian's past threatens to rock the boat. Expect quite a bit of coupling.

**Released Fri 10 February**

### Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk CERT 15 (113 mins)

Starring **Kristen Stewart, Vin Diesel, Garrett Hedlund, Steve Martin, Joe Alwyn, Chris Tucker**  
Directed by **Ang Lee (USA/UK/China)**

We're unlikely to encounter a more improbable cast all year. Based on the novel by Ben Fountain, Ang Lee's latest film follows Billy Lynn as he attends a victory parade in his native Georgia. However, flashbacks to Iraq reveal a story at odds with the ticker-tape heroism.

**Released Fri 10 February**





## Fences CERT 12a (139 mins)

Starring **Denzel Washington, Viola Davis, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Jovan Adepo, Russell Hornsby, Mykelti Williamson**  
Directed by **Denzel Washington (USA)**

A likely Oscar contender, *Fences* marks Denzel Washington's third directorial outing, an adaptation of August Wilson's Pulitzer Prize-winning play of 1983. Denzel plays Troy Maxson, a refuse collector on the street and paterfamilias and alpha male in his own home. In the back yard, where he's building a fence - purportedly to keep out death and to keep in what belongs him to him - Troy recounts tales of his youth, his plans for the future and his anger with the white man's world. As the film is set in Pittsburgh in the 1950s, its patois may at first be tricky for the modern ear, but stay with it and the drama seeps out, gradually tightening its grip on the throat.

**Released Fri 10 February**



## 20th Century Women

CERT 15 (118 mins)

Starring **Annette Bening, Elle Fanning, Greta Gerwig, Lucas Jade Zumann, Billy Crudup Sula, Haley Lu Richardson, Betty Buckley**  
Directed by **Mike Mills (USA)**

In the late 1970s, three different women in Southern California undergo separate experiences involving love and freedom. The director, Mike Mills, previously brought us *Thumbsucker* (2005) and the Oscar-winning *Beginners* (2010).

**Released Fri 10 February**



## The Lego Batman Movie CERT U (104 mins)

With the voices of **Will Arnett, Zach Galifianakis, Michael Cera, Rosario Dawson, Ralph Fiennes** Directed by **Chris McKay (USA)**

A spin-off of *The Lego Movie*, this computer-animated comic fantasy this time focuses on The Caped Crusader and the young boy he's adopted. It's emotional.

**Released Fri 10 February**



## The Space Between Us

CERT tbc

Starring **Gary Oldman, Asa Butterfield, Carla Gugino, Britt Robertson, BD Wong, Janet Montgomery**  
Directed by **Peter Chelsom (USA)**

There is a lot of space between Gardner Elliot (Butterfield) and Earth, as he was the first human to be born on Mars. He is now returning to the planet of his parents and sees our world like nobody before... Great premise - from the director of *Hear My Song* and *Shall We Dance?*

**Released Fri 10 February**

## Hidden Figures

CERT PG (127 mins)

Starring **Taraji P Henson, Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monáe, Kevin Costner, Kirsten Dunst**  
Directed by **Theodore Melfi (USA)**

The title - taken from the non-fiction work by Margot Lee Shetterly - not only refers to the mathematical data used to launch NASA's Project Mercury in 1962, but to the team of African-American women who provided it. The US reviews were rhapsodic.

**Released Fri 17 February**



## The Founder CERT 15 (115 mins)

Starring **Michael Keaton, Laura Dern, Nick Offerman, John Carroll Lynch, Patrick Wilson**  
Directed by **John Lee Hancock (USA)**



In recent years, Michael Keaton has become something of a heavyweight in acting circles. Here he plays the businessman Ray Kroc who, in 1961, bought a hamburger chain from two brothers and made it his own. The siblings were called Mac and Dick McDonald.

**Released Fri 17 February**

## The Great Wall

CERT 12a (103 mins)

Starring **Matt Damon, Jing Tian, Pedro Pascal, Willem Dafoe, Andy Lau**  
Directed by **Zhang Yimou (USA/China)**

In spite of its ominous title, this historical fantasy is actually about the Great Wall of China. At least, the construction is a major player in an epic featuring Matt Damon as a European mercenary, nomadic bandits, Chinese soldiers and a horde of monsters. In 3D.

**Released Fri 17 February**



## Patriots Day CERT 15 (133 mins)

Starring **Mark Wahlberg, John Goodman, JK Simmons, Michelle Monaghan, Kevin Bacon** Directed by **Peter Berg (USA)**

An account of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, *Patriots Day* reunites Mark Wahlberg and director Peter Berg, who previously collaborated on *Deepwater Horizon*, about another true-life catastrophe.

**Released Thurs 23 February**



## New Art West Midlands

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, mac, Birmingham, Worcester City Art Gallery & Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Sat 18 February - Sun 14 May

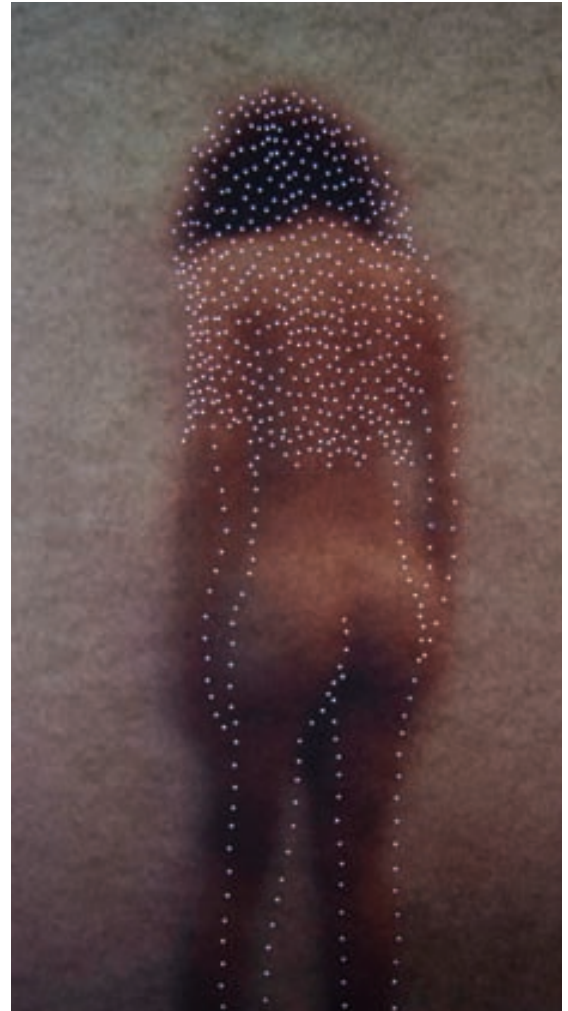
Thirty-one artists from six regional art schools this month exhibit new work at four leading galleries as part of New Art West Midlands 2017.

A launch vehicle for emerging artists, New Art West Midlands is using Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, mac Birmingham, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Coventry's Herbert Gallery & Museum to display the new work, which includes painting, installation, sculpture, photography, video, animation and digital artworks.

Highlights of the show include Yazmin Boyle's three-metre-long metal sculptures. The sculptures are made of industrial steel strap overlaid with a feminine lace print and formed into three-dimensional funnels and circles.

Amy Inston's film, meanwhile, brings together images of Hollywood glamour and the American Dream with footage of the real domestic life of her working-class Birmingham family.

Many of the works on show take themes connected to science and biology, while numerous other pieces focus on the subjects of globalisation, migration and belonging. The exhibition is the first initiative of the rebranded New Art West Midlands network, formerly known as Turning Point West Midlands.



## Francis Bacon: Two Figures In A Room

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, Fri 10 February - Sun 26 March

Works by Matisse, Degas and Michelangelo have all been suggested as sources for this 1959 painting by Francis Bacon. On loan from the University of East Anglia, Two Figures In A Room is considered to be one of the artist's finest works. Painted when Bacon was around the age of 50, it features two naked figures, widely assumed to be male lovers. Not surprisingly given its subject matter, the painting raised many an eyebrow. It was considered both daring and provocative in the conservative days of the late 1950s, a time when homosexual acts in private between men were still illegal in the UK.

## Face To Face: Portraits Through Time

The Herbert Museum & Art Gallery, Coventry, Fri 3 February - Sun 4 June

This fascinating exhibition brings together works loaned from numerous sources, including the Arts Council Collection and the National Portrait Gallery. Featuring snapshots of ordinary people as well as portraits of Henry VIII, Marilyn Monroe, David Bowie and Princess Diana, Face To Face explores the centuries-old fascination with capturing one's own image. The display includes works by Andy Warhol and Thomas Gainsborough, and comprises paintings, photographs, sculptures and interactive activities.



Nelson Mandela, 1962 ©University of Dundee, The Peto Collection

## Idris Khan: A World Within

New Art Gallery, Walsall, Fri 3 February - Sun 7 May

Given that Idris Khan grew up in Walsall, the New Art Gallery is a particularly appropriate venue in which to mount a major survey of his work. Khan's densely layered pieces - photographs, paintings, sculptures, moving images and installations - are inspired by numerous cultural sources, including literature, history, art, music and religion.

The exhibition features two new layered glass paintings, as well as a sculpture which will be on show in the UK for the first time.



## The Royal Photographic Society International Images For Science Exhibition

The Hive, Worcester, Wed 8 February - Wed 22 March

Selecting the best 100 photographic images for this exhibition can't have been an easy task, given that a staggering 2,500 pictures were submitted for consideration. Despite having their work cut out, the judging panel of four have done an admirable job, selecting photographs which perfectly meet the exhibition criterion - to be visually appealing but also have a science story to tell.

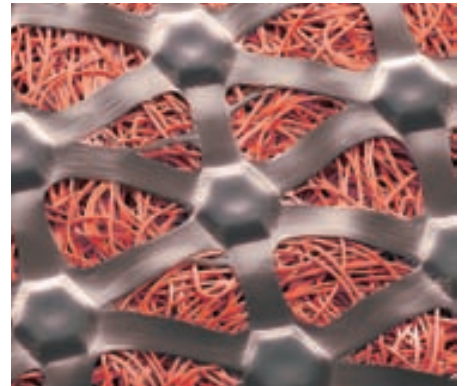
The included artworks range from highly technical images taken with expensive equipment, through to photographs shot on smartphones.

Having opened at The Crystal in London, the exhibition is visiting Worcester this month as part of a UK-wide tour. Its stop-off at The Hive, coinciding with British Science Week

(10 - 19 March), is the inspiration for a series of school workshops running at the venue, during which children can investigate the theme of 'hidden in plain sight'.

The workshops offer interactive opportunities for youngsters to investigate forensics, pollen and sound waves, guided by University of Worcester staff and students. Commenting on the RPS show, Anne Hannaford, Director of Arts & Culture at the University, said: "We're thrilled to once again be hosting the exhibition at The Hive, particularly during British Science Week. Bringing science and art together through photography sparks curiosity in young people and helps them explore and view STEM (science, technology, engineering & mathematics) subjects with interest and enthusiasm."

In addition to the RPS exhibition, two smaller Hive displays showcase the photography of Mike Hallett and David James, academics at the University who are also fellows of the RPS.



## Draw New Mischief

Paccar Room, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, Sat 25 February - Fri 15 September

This free exhibition celebrates more than two centuries of political cartoons inspired by Shakespeare.

Presented to coincide with the RSC's forthcoming season of Rome-themed plays, Draw New Mischief showcases historical works from key political moments in time.

Featured contemporary cartoons include Peter Schrank's 2015 depiction of Ed Miliband and Nicola Sturgeon as the star-crossed lovers Romeo and Juliet, and Morten Morland's April 2016 cartoon of David Cameron as Hamlet, gazing at Boris Johnson's skull.

The RSC has also commissioned five cartoonists to create brand new works. The cartoonists will use Shakespeare's Rome plays to respond to political events which occur during the period that the exhibition is on show. The RSC's Rome season features productions of Julius Caesar, Antony & Cleopatra, Titus Andronicus and Coriolanus.



## Hand And Mind

Grand Union, Birmingham, Fri 3 February - Sat 25 March

Connections between the realms of speech and gesture are tested in this multimedia exhibition, curated by Vanessa Boni and featuring painting, sculpture, choreography and performance. The included pieces, produced by five artists, seek to alter viewers' perceptions of the communicative synthesis of spoken language and physical gesture, in so doing unsettling political, personal and theoretical channels of communication.



## Just Move Exhibition

The Works, Birmingham, Fri 3 February

Local artist David Roman has been a busy man. For this first solo exhibition, he undertook a project which saw him produce, in the space of 350 days, the same number of watercolour paintings, the shared theme of which was human movement.

"My project is about celebrating the amazing and fascinating super-machine that is the human body," says David. "Each one of the paintings tells a unique story about different people on their own journeys of self-expression."

## Beyond The Door: The Koestler Exhibition For The West Midlands

mac, Birmingham, until Sun 26 March

Charitable scheme the Koestler Trust has been rewarding artistic achievement in the criminal justice sector for more than 50 years. This new exhibition features a selection of entries from the 2016 Koestler Awards competition. Presenting artwork, audio and creative writing from prisons, secure hospitals and young offender institutions in the West Midlands, the show encourages viewers to re-evaluate ex-offenders and consider the positive contributions they can make to society.

The show is curated by young people from Walsall Youth Service.





# MCM COMIC CON

**Cartoon characters, supernatural creatures, cosplay crowds - the MCM Comic Con is a world unto itself. What's On checks out a phenomenon that has its roots firmly planted in the Midlands region...**



There can be few in the UK today who haven't witnessed the stunning spectacle of crowds of cosplayers descending on fan conventions, at least on screen if not in person.

Over the last few years, the popularity of such events has soared, with large-scale London shows attracting eye-watering attendance figures in excess of 133,000.

It's perhaps surprising then that the biggest company in the business is based here in the Midlands, running three local conventions annually in addition to shows across the country from its offices in Daventry, Northamptonshire.

Now firmly cemented in the cultural calendars of countless die-hard fans who visit every year, the hugely successful MCM (Movies, Comics & Media) group continues to grow, extending its reach beyond UK borders into Ireland, Belgium and Germany. Whether or not you're a regular visitor, if you've ever had the chance to attend an MCM Comic Con, it's not hard to understand the appeal.

Incongruously nestled behind the business-like facades of conference and exhibition centres, every MCM convention is a world unto itself, where cartoon characters spring to life and supernatural creatures freely roam, where stalls swelled with merchandise and unique fan creations stretch as far as the eye can see, and where video and tabletop gaming become serious competitive sports.

Like an old-fashioned festival of misrule, everything is upside-down. While Hollywood stars become ordinary people, sitting and talking amongst their fans, ordinary folks get their chance to enjoy the limelight, taking to the stage to perform in painstakingly handmade costumes to heartfelt and hard-earned applause, even winning accolades and prizes for their endeavours.

While young people make up a large part of the audience, it's by no means exclusive - there are fans to be found of all ages and generations, from those who grew up in the sci-fi heyday of the 1960s, to the children of the digital revolution of today.

Look closely and you might even spot whole families wearing matching costumes. It's something that's encouraged. At both MCM Birmingham and MCM Midlands in Telford, kids under 10 go free after priority entry ends at 11am. Even if you enter feeling cynical, the overwhelming dedication, warmth, enthusiasm and inclusivity of the fans is irresistible, whether you're dressed as Deadpool or a Disney princess.

But it wasn't always so. The MCM story dates right back to 2001, in those quiet days of geekdom before Spider-Man had kicked off a superhero movie revolution, before Russell T Davies had revived Doctor Who, before comics had reached out to mainstream readership, and well before the cosplay phenomenon had really taken off in the UK. Some small-scale conventions and specialised gatherings already existed, but it was SciFi Shows' Paul Miley and Wolf Events' Bryan Cooney who were the first to hatch a plan to bring something akin to the all-encompassing American fan events to Britain, also partly inspired by the NEC's nostalgic Memorabilia show, which would later be subsumed into MCM Birmingham (in 2005).

Thanks to a happy confluence of circumstances that saw attitudes change towards previously sidelined interests, conventions are now such big business that independents are constantly cropping up. But 16 years and multiple shows later, MCM's remain the biggest and most popular in Britain, unrivalled in attendance outside London.

Said MCM Expo Group CEO Bryan Cooney: "The Midlands holds a special place in our hearts. As it is, after all, where our company is based, we plan on providing an awesome show for the region's enthusiastic audience of sci-fi, comic book and film fans. We've welcomed a host of great special guests to our Midlands comic cons over the years; this time round we already have Game Of Thrones' Ian McElhinney (Ser Barristan Selmy) and Red Dwarf's Chris Barrie (Rimmer)."

In addition to these and other fantastic guests still to be announced, those planning a trip to the forthcoming shows in Telford and Birmingham can expect to see indie writers and artists filling the Comic Village, robot wars, a Steampunk Emporium with workshops and talks, a KidsZone, eSports competitions, panel discussions, changing areas, a costume repair desk and of course the Cosplay Masquerade finale, all included in the price of a ticket.

Regular stallholders like Amazing Cake Co, Manga Entertainment, Genki Gear, CeX and Tokyo Toys (who recently set up a permanent shop in Birmingham) also return, alongside a host of other local and national businesses.

And as an extra incentive to stop by in Telford, costume-clad visitors will be eligible for 50% off ice-skating at the Telford Ice Rink!

.....

**MCM Comic Con Midlands is held at Telford International on Saturday 11 February.**

**MCM Comic Con Birmingham takes place at the NEC on Saturday 18 to Sunday 19 March.**

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## Events



### Race Retro

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, Fri 24 - Sun 26 February

The presence of motorsport legend Tom Kristensen is one of the undoubted highlights of this month's historic motorsport show. Kristensen won Le Mans at his first attempt in 1997 and has triumphed in the event a record nine times, six of his victories taking place in consecutive years.

Tom is joined at this year's show by Finnish rally legends Ari Vatanen

and Markku Alén, who'll be getting back behind the wheel for a 'clash of the titans'.

Now in its 15th year, Race Retro showcases every motorsport discipline, including formula and circuit racing, rallying, hill climbs, touring cars, motorcycling, sports and GT cars.

The show also offers visitors the chance to purchase parts, spares, helmets and clothing, as well as new racing or rally cars in a special auction.

### Birth Of Flight

Ironbridge Gorge Museums, Shropshire, Sat 18 - Sun 26 February

Ironbridge Gorge Museums is celebrating the birth of flight during the half-term holiday, presenting a range of themed family activities at some of its most popular attractions.

Visitors can discover the fun of flying at the Eenuity design & technology centre, building and launching a pneumatic rocket at twice-daily drop-in workshops.

There are falconry displays and kite-making opportunities to enjoy at Blists Hill Victorian Town, while people paying a visit to the Jackfield Tile Museum can decorate tiles with images of a hot-air balloon, flying saucer, aeroplane or other flying 'machine'.

Across the river, the Coalport China Museum gets in on the act too, providing visitors with the chance to sculpt their own flying creature.



### Müller Indoor Grand Prix Birmingham

Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham, Sat 18 February

Indoor Grand Prix Birmingham 2017 brings together many of the country's top athletes to compete in track and field events.

Six Rio Olympic champions have been confirmed for the meeting, including four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah. The recordbreaking Laura Muir is also competing, attempting to smash Kelly Holmes' British record over 1,000 metres.

And in what promises to be a spectacular clash, Britain's top female sprinter, Dina Asher-Smith, will face double Olympic champion Elaine Thompson over 60 metres.

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## Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show

NEC, Birmingham, Tues 21 - Sun 26 February

Attracting huge crowds and promising to be 'bigger and better than ever', the Caravan, Camping & Motorhome Show features over 350 exhibitors.

As well as exploring all the latest products, the show also offers buying tips, holiday

advice and a packed programme of events and entertainment. Featured fun includes cookery demonstrations, bushcraft workshops, an adventure assault course, a mobile climbing mountain, an artificial caving zone and a dog agility arena.

Television presenter and adventurer Ben Fogle heads the show's celebrity line-up, which also includes Kate Humble, Julia Bradbury, four-time Welsh National Surfing Champion Jo Dennison and Barney Harwood.

## Airfix Make And Take

RAF Cosford Museum, Mon 20 - Fri 24 February



This annual family-friendly event is this year providing visitors with the chance to build a 1:72 Spitfire, Mitsubishi Zero, Albatros and Sopwith Pup. For families with younger children, there's a wooden biplane to assemble and decorate together. Modelling skills aren't required in order to take part, as staff will be on hand to provide assistance. The museum is offering all participants a 10% discount on model kits from the souvenir shop.

## Brick Week

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Sat 18 - Sun 26 February

A week of automotive-themed brick-building challenges is on offer this half term at the British Motor Museum - including the chance to help build a lifesize Mini out of Lego bricks. Visitors will be able to complete their own brick section, afterwards handing it over to professional model builders to assemble into the lifesize model.

The event also includes the 25-Brick Challenge, providing competitively minded motor enthusiasts with the opportunity to build a British car. A Mini-related museum trail and a dedicated foam-brick area for the under-fives also feature.



## On The Move

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, Sat 18 - Sun 26 February

An exploration of the region's transport heritage is the highlight of the Black Country Living Museum's half-term holiday line-up of entertainment.

As well as its celebration of all things 'on the move', the popular venue also offers visitors the chance to try out some traditional street games and experience a trip 'into the thick', sampling life in an 1850s-style coal mine.

## Llangollen Mind Body Spirit Festival

Llangollen Pavilion, North Wales, Sun 5 February

At a time when world events are regularly adding an extra level of anxiety to the stresses and strains of everyday life, the chance to access some spiritual nourishment at this one-day event will prove hugely appealing to a good many people. The show features more than 60 stalls offering: alternative therapies; psychic one-to-one readings; complementary healing; mediumship, tarot and angel cards; well-being and beauty products; ethical cosmetics; crystals, incense, fair-trade gifts and alternative crafts. There are free workshops available too, as well as a range of vegetarian and vegan food to enjoy in the Pavilion restaurant.

## Chinese New Year Of The Rooster

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, Sun 5 February

Traditional dragon and lion dances, firecrackers, magic, acrobats and folk dancing all feature in this Chinese New Year celebration. Visitors with a leaning towards craft-based activities can scratch their creative itch by getting to grips with Chinese painting, writing and origami. Theatrical endeavours include performances from local Chinese Sunday school children and an extract of Cantonese Opera performed in full cultural costume.

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**BEN FOGLE**     **JULIA BRADBURY**     **BARNEY HARWOOD**

Celebrity guests may be subject to change.

## The 50+ Show

NEC, Birmingham, Fri 17 - Sat 18 February

If you're old enough to remember the Glam Rock era, the three-day week and plenty of things that went before, you're the right age to get yourself along to this event.

This year's 50+ Show focuses on the four key topics of hobbies & crafts, finance & money, health and travel. Along the way it provides no shortage of evidence that life beyond that first half century can offer plenty in terms of adventure, while also recognising that there may be the occasional challenge to overcome.

So if you'd like to discover the secrets of good mental health, find out about special-interest holidays, contemplate taking up cake decorating, or fancy exploring genealogy, this is the show for you.

## Hot Rods And Kool Kustoms

Coventry Transport Museum, until Sun 14 May

Retro racers abound at a show that urges you to fire up your engines and take a trip down memory lane. Featuring hot rods from across the UK and icons from both the American and British custom car scene, this exhibition of vintage vehicles comes complete with an interactive family area. Hands-on experiences include the chance to customise a real car bonnet using pin-striping techniques, race cars down a ramp with loop-the-loops and celebrate on a special winner's podium.

## I'm An Arley Adventurer, Get Me Out Of Here!

Arley Arboretum, nr Bewdley, Mon 20 - Fri 24 February

Keeping kids captivated with creepy-crawly capers is Arley Arboretum's sworn intention this half-term holiday.

Little ones can explore the venue's brand new 'adventurer bug trail' and check out the mystery boxes found en route. There are crawlies hiding inside each box, but only plastic ones, to ensure the experience is suitable for youngsters of all ages.

The venue's specialist 'bug man' will be putting in a daily appearance too (from midday to 2pm), bringing along with him lots of mini beasts as well as numerous other animals, including snakes, tarantulas, lizards, an owl and a pygmy hedgehog.

Arley activities for children who'd prefer to steer clear of all things creepy crawlly include a special maze, an adventure playground and the dinosaur, fairy and pre-school Woodland Animal Trail.



## Castle Quest

Tamworth Castle, Mon 20 - Sun 26 February

An event developed from numerous computer-game concepts, Castle Quest has been designed with teenagers very much in mind. As Questers make their way around the castle, they come into contact

with various characters, each with a unique word to share. Problem is, though, they'll only share that word if a task is completed or a riddle solved... On conclusion of the Quest, participants take 'the ultimate challenge' - to walk the Quest grid blindfolded, testing the success of their problem-solving skills.

## February Half Term Activities at the RSC

Various RSC venues, Stratford-upon-Avon, Mon 20 - Fri 24 February

The Royal Shakespeare Company is offering so much by way of activities to enjoy this half-term holiday that it might make sense to spend the whole week in Stratford!

Highlights of the RSC's family-friendly programme include: the chance for children at different ages to create their very own shortened version of Julius Caesar; a special workshop in which kids can write

prose or poetry inspired by the history of the RSC, Shakespeare and theatre; and a behind-the-scenes look at how theatrical bruises, cuts and scars are created. The line-up also features a Storytime adventure, an afternoon of free craft activities, the chance to create a masked performance and learn the art of stage combat, and an opportunity to get to grips with the story and themes of Julius Caesar. Oh, and you can even learn how to decorate cupcakes, courtesy of the RSC's magnificently talented pastry chef. If ever a legendary theatre company had all the half-term bases covered...



Award FINALISTS in each category announced! **VOTE** for your **WINNER!**

# What's On Readers' Awards

Yes, you VOTED in your thousands in the first round of nominations in the **What's On Readers' Awards - over 10,000 votes across the West Midlands region!** Now it's time for you to VOTE once more to choose your ultimate WINNER in each category! Here are the award shortlist finalists:

#### **THEATRE: Midlands Large Theatre**

- Birmingham Hippodrome
- New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
- Regent Theatre, Hanley
- Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford
- The REP, Birmingham
- Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

#### **THEATRE: Midlands Arts Centre**

- Foxlowe Arts Centre, Stoke
- mac, Birmingham
- Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton
- The Hive, Shrewsbury
- Warwick Arts Centre

#### **THEATRE: Best Touring Musical**

- Blood Brothers
- Dirty Dancing
- Hairspray
- Mamma Mia!
- Mary Poppins
- The Jersey Boys

#### **THEATRE: Best Touring Play**

- Gangsta Granny
- Of Mice & Men
- Shawshank Redemption
- The Full Monty
- The Woman In Black

#### **THEATRE: Best Home Produced Show In The Midlands**

- Bring On The Bollywood - Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
- Gangsta Granny - Birmingham Stage Company
- Hamlet - Royal Shakespeare Company
- Singin' In The Rain - The New Vic
- The Exorcist - The REP
- The Wind In The Willows - The Old Rep, Birmingham

#### **THEATRE: Best Pantomime In The Midlands 2016/17**

- Aladdin - Grand Theatre W'hampton
- Cinderella - Regent Theatre, Hanley
- Cinderella - Theatre Severn
- Dick Whittington - Birmingham Hippodrome
- Dick Whittington - Belgrade Theatre
- Sleeping Beauty - Lichfield Garrick

#### **THEATRE: Best Kids Show**

- Disney On Ice presents Frozen
- Gangsta Granny
- Room On The Broom
- The Bear
- The Snowman
- We're Going On A Bear Hunt

#### **THEATRE: Best Amateur Dramatic/Operatic Group**

- Bilston Operatic Company
- Bournville Musical Theatre Company
- Get Your Wiggle On
- Old Joint Stock Musical Theatre Co.
- West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS)
- Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company (MUSCOM)

#### **THEATRE: Best Amateur Production**

- American Idiot - Old Joint Stock Musical Theatre Company
- Fame - Wolverhampton Musical Comedy Company (MUSCOM)
- Jekyll & Hyde - Bournville Musical Theatre Company
- Legally Blonde - Stourbridge Amateur Operatic Society
- Made in Dagenham - West Bromwich Operatic Society (WBOS)
- Our House - The Madness Musical - Bilston Operatic Company

#### **DANCE: Best Production**

- Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
- BRB - The Nutcracker
- Life: Balletboyz

**VOTE** today at [whatsonlive.co.uk](http://whatsonlive.co.uk)

- Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty
- Snow White - Vienna Festival Ballet

**CLASSICAL (inc Opera):  
Best Production**

- Birmingham Opera Company - Dido 'n' Aeneas
- English Touring Opera - Don Giovanni
- HMS Pinafore - Sasha Regan
- WNO - Kiss Me Kate
- WNO - Sweeney Todd

**CLASSICAL:**

**Best Orchestra/Choir**

- Birmingham Bach Choir
- Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (BCMG)
- Birmingham Gay Symphony Orchestra
- Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra
- City Of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO)

**ARTS: Best Midlands Arts/Cultural Festival**

- Artsfest Wolverhampton
- Birmingham Literature Festival
- Birmingham Comedy Festival
- Flatpack Festival
- Godiva Festival
- International Dance Festival B'ham

**ARTS: Best Exhibition**

- All The World's A Stage - Barber Institute
- Craft Open West Midlands
- Grayson Perry: The Vanity of Small Differences - Herbert Art Gallery
- Inspire 16 - Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2016 - Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**Best Independent Cinema**

- Electric Cinema - Birmingham
- Light House Media Centre - Wolverhampton
- mac - Birmingham
- Old Market Hall - Shrewsbury
- Red Carpet Cinema - Burton

**COMEDY: Best Midlands Comedian**

- Barbara Nice
- Greg Davies
- Jay Islaam
- Joe Lycett
- Jonny Cole

**COMEDY: Best Midlands Comedy Break-through**

- Josh Pugh
- Masai Graham
- Sarah Johnson
- Stu Woodings
- Tom Christian

**COMEDY: Best Midlands Comedy Night**

- Blue Giraffe - Wolverhampton
- CAN Comedy
- Comedy 42 - Lichfield Garrick
- Comedy Carousel at The Glee Club, Birmingham
- Comedy at Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
- Just The Tonic - Birmingham

**Best Midlands Music Venue (Large: 1000+ capacity)**

- Barclaycard Arena - Birmingham
- Genting Arena - Birmingham
- O2 Academy - Birmingham
- Symphony Hall - Birmingham
- Victoria Hall - Hanley

**Best Midlands Music Festival**

- Birmingham & Solihull Jazz Festival
- Lichfield Arts' Fuse Festival
- Moseley Folk Festival
- Shrewsbury Folk Festival
- Slam Dunk Festival

**Best Midlands Musician**

- Dan Owen
- Laura Mvula
- Libby Gिल्sman
- Scott Matthews
- Soweto Kinch

**Best Midlands Live Band**

- Electric Swing Circus
- Ned's Atomic Dustbin
- Peace
- Stephen Duffy & The Lilac Time
- The Twang

**Best Midlands Chef**

- Adam Stokes (Adams, Birmingham)
- Brad Carter (Carters of Moseley)
- Glynn Purnell (Purnell's, Birmingham)
- Luke Tipping (Simpsons, Birmingham)
- Richard Turner (Turners, Birmingham)

**Best Midlands Food Festival**

- Great British Food Festival - Shugborough
- Foodies Festival Birmingham
- Lichfield Food Festival
- Ludlow Food Festival
- Shrewsbury Food Festival

**Best Midlands Street Food Vendor**

- Andy Low 'n' Slow
- Baked in Brick
- Buddha Belly
- Bournville Waffle Company
- Vegan Grindhouse
- The Meat Shack

**Best Midlands Retail Shopping Centre**

- Bullring - Birmingham
- Grand Central - Birmingham
- Mailbox - Birmingham
- Mell Square Shopping Centre - Solihull
- Merry Hill - Brierley Hill
- Telford Shopping Centre

**Midlands Entertainment Personality of the Year Award**

- Adil Ray (Citizen Khan)
- Beverley Knight
- Doreen Tipton
- Julie Walters
- Lenny Henry

and choose your **WINNER!**

## BIRMINGHAM

### Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- The Crescent
- mac Birmingham
- New Alexandra
- Old Joint Stock
- The Old Rep
- The REP

### Best Music Venue

- The Glee Club,
- Hare & Hounds
- The Jam House
- mac,
- The Roadhouse,

### Best Festival

- Birmingham Comedy
- Birmingham & Solihull Jazz & Blues
- MADE Birmingham
- Moseley Folk
- Mostly Jazz, Funk & Soul

### Best Visitor Attraction

- Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Cadbury World
- Sealife Centre
- The Jewellery Quarter
- Thinktank

### Best Outdoor Event

- Birmingham Ice Rink in Centenary Square
- Birmingham Pride
- Frankfurt Christmas Market
- Magical Lantern Festival
- Summer in Southside

### Best Indoor Event

- BBC Good Food Show
- Brick Live (LEGO)
- Clothes Show Live
- Grand Designs
- MCM Comic Con

### Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- The Barber Institute
- Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
- Birmingham Open Media
- Ilkon
- mac
- Thinktank

## BLACK COUNTRY

### Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Arena Theatre
- Dudley Concert Hall
- Forest Arts Centre
- Grand Theatre
- Newhampton Arts Centre

### Best Music Venue

- Dudley Concert Hall
- Katie Fitzgeralds
- The Civic Hall
- The Robin 2
- The Slade Rooms

### Best Visitor Attraction

- Black Country Living Museum
- Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust
- Dudley Zoo
- RAF Cosford Museum
- Wightwick Manor
- Wolverhampton Racecourse

### Best Event

- 1940s Evening - Black Country Living Museum
- Artsfest W'hampton
- Cosford Air Show
- Dudley Beer Festival
- Go Wild Week at Dudley Zoo

### Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- Bilston Craft Gallery
- Dudley Museum & Art Gallery
- Light House Media Centre
- New Art Gallery, Walsall
- Wolverhampton Museum & Art Gallery

### Best Independent Restaurant

- Indigo Restaurant, Wolverhampton
- Mad O'Rourke's Pie Factory, Dudley
- Penn Tandoori, Wolverhampton
- The Old Glasshouse, Dudley
- The Summerhouse, Dudley

### Best Independent Cafe

- Cafe Cappella, Dudley
- Cozy Coffee, Dudley
- Gluttons For Nourishment,
- The Brook Coffee House, Wolverhampton
- The Old School Tea Rooms, Wolverhampton

## WARWICKSHIRE

### Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Albany Theatre, Coventry
- Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
- Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford
- Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
- The Criterion Theatre, Coventry
- Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

### Best Music Venue

- The Assembly, Leamington Spa
- The Copper Rooms, Coventry
- The Kasbah, Coventry
- Tin Music & Arts, Coventry
- Warwick Arts Centre

### Best Festival

- Godiva Festival
- Leamington Food and Drink Festival
- Lunar Festival
- Stratford River Festival
- Warwick Folk Festival

### Best Visitor Attraction

- British Motor Museum
- Coventry Transport Museum
- Kenilworth Castle
- Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust
- Warwick Castle

### Best Event

- Art In The Park, Leamington Spa
- Brick Wonders, Herbert Art Gallery
- Coventry Sky Ride
- Godiva Festival
- Making Mischief - RSC

### Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- Compton Verney
- Coventry Music Museum
- Herbert Art Gallery
- Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum
- Mead Gallery

### Best Independent Restaurant

- Cheals of Henley, Henley-in-Arden
- Greyhound Inn, Coventry
- La Coppola, Leamington Spa
- Restaurant 23, Leamington Spa
- The Cross, Kenilworth

## WORCESTERSHIRE

### Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Artrix, Bromsgrove
- Evesham Arts Centre
- Huntingdon Hall, Worcester
- Malvern Theatres
- Swan Theatre, Worcester

### Best Music Venue

- Drummonds Bar, Worcester
- Huntingdon Hall, Worcester
- The Boar's Head, Kidderminster
- The Iron Road, Evesham
- The Marr's Bar, Worcester

### Best Festival

- Asparafest, Nr Evesham
- Bromsgrove Folk
- Malvern Food Festival
- Worcester Music Fest
- Upton Upon Severn Jazz Festival

### Best Visitor Attraction

- Avoncroft, Bromsgrove
- Elgar's Birthplace, Worcester
- Hanbury Hall and Gardens
- Severn Valley Railway, Bewdley
- West Mid Safari Park

### Best Independent Restaurant

- Banners Café & Restaurant, Bromsgrove
- Casa Med Tapas, Bromsgrove
- Saffron's Bistro, Worcester
- The Olive Branch, Worcester
- The Royal Oak, Evesham

### Best Independent Café

- Coffee No.1, Pershore
- G&Tea, Worcester
- Lorita's Bakehouse, Bromsgrove
- Mac & Jac's Cafe-Deli, Worcester
- Word Of Mouth, Evesham

### Best Nightclub

- 57 Monkeys, Bromsgrove
- Marilyn's Nightclub, Evesham
- The Flag, Worcester
- The Velvet Lounge,
- Tramps, Worcester

## STAFFORDSHIRE

### Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Lichfield Garrick
- New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme
- Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock
- Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent
- Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

### Best Music Venue

- Lichfield Guildhall
- Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock
- Victoria Hall, Hanley
- Tamworth Assembly Rooms
- The Sugarmill, Stoke

### Best Festival

- Big Feast, Stoke-On-Trent
- Stafford Arts Festival
- Lichfield Arts' Fuse Festival
- Great British Food Festival - Shugborough
- Lichfield Festival

### Best Visitor Attraction

- Alton Towers
- Drayton Manor Theme Park
- Lichfield Cathedral
- Monkey Forest
- National Memorial Arboretum
- Tamworth Castle

### Best Event

- Lichfield Lumiere
- Lichfield Proms in Beacon Park
- Scarefest at Alton Towers
- St. George's Day at Tamworth Castle
- The Enchanted Chandelier at Central Forest Park

### Best Nightclub

- Bunker 13, Stoke
- Couture, Stafford
- Kuda, Tamworth
- Pink, Stoke
- Silks, Cannock

### Best Independent Café

- 15 On The Corner, Lichfield
- Damn Fine Cafe, Lichfield
- Little Green Frog Cafe, Lichfield
- The Food Room,
- The Lounge of Lichfield
- Whitmore Tearooms, Newcastle-under-Lyme

## SHROPSHIRE

### Best Arts/Theatre Venue

- Theatre Severn
- The Hive, Shrewsbury
- The Place, Telford
- The Wightman, Shrewsbury
- Theatre On The Steps

### Best Music Venue

- Walker Theatre
- Havana Republic, Shrewsbury
- Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury
- The Buttermarket, Shrewsbury
- The Hive, Shrewsbury

### Best Festival

- Farmer Phil's Festival
- Ludlow Food Festival
- Haydn Festival
- Shrewsbury Folk Festival
- Shrewsbury Food Festival

### Best Visitor Attraction

- Attingham Park
- British Ironworks Centre, Oswestry
- Dana Prison Tours
- Ironbridge Museums
- Severn Valley Railway, Bridgnorth
- Shrewsbury Castle

### Best Event

- 1940s Evening at Blists Hill
- The Big Busk
- MCM Comic Con Midlands, Telford
- Shrewsbury Flower Show
- Tattoo Freeze

### Best Gallery/Exhibition Venue

- Bear Steps Art Gallery, Shrewsbury
- Coalbrookdale Gallery, Ironbridge
- Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery
- Van, The Market Hall, Shrewsbury
- Willow Gallery, Oswestry

### Best Shropshire Nightclub

- The Buttermarket,
- C:21, Shrewsbury
- Club Crush, Telford
- Inferno, Shrewsbury
- Pussycats Night Club, Telford

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# the list

Your week to week  
listings guide

February 2017



The Full Monty at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury - Mon 6 - Sat 11 February

Music | Comedy | Theatre | Dance | Film | Events | Visual Arts | and more!

## What's On

Wed 1 to Sun 5 February



Chinese New Year of the  
Rooster at The Potteries  
Museum & Art Gallery, Hanley  
**Sun 5 February**

Mon 6 to Sun 12 February



Union J at The Sugarmill,  
Stoke-on-Trent  
**Thurs 9 February**

Mon 13 to Sun 19 February



The Classic Dirt Bike Show at  
Telford International Centre  
**Sat 18 - Sun 19 February**

Mon 20 to Tues 28 February



Sister Act at Wolverhampton  
Grand Theatre  
**Mon 27 February -  
Sat 4 March**

### THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY

## Visual Arts

### Bilston Craft Gallery

**BOWLS, BUCKETS AND BEDSTEADS - BILSTON INDUSTRIES BETWEEN THE WARS** The period between the wars is often remembered for economic depression, but Bilston industries large and small kept producing the goods. Featuring products from firms such as Beldray, Sankey and Phoenix Glass, until Sun 26 Mar

### New Art Gallery - Walsall

**NEW ANDREW GILLESPIE: ANTI-SCRAPE** Andrew has created a new constellation of objects; an urban drift of materials and allusions to everyday experience, Fri 3 Feb - Sun 23 Apr

**NEW SCENES OF WALSALL** Many scenes of Walsall have been collected since the establishment of Walsall's public art collection in 1892. To help celebrate the Permanent Collection's 125th birthday, a range of these are here on display, from a lithograph of Walsall High Street in 1845 to contemporary photographs, Sat 18 Feb - Sun 16 July

### Potteries Museum & Art Gallery - Stoke-On-Trent

**NEW ARNOLD BENNETT: IN LIFE AND ART** Dipping into the museum's world-class Arnold Bennett collections of artworks, personal possessions and clothing, photographs, documents and ephemera, this exhibition creates new perspectives on the man and his life, Sat 18 Feb - Sun 2 July

### Shire Hall Gallery - Stafford

**STAFFORDSHIRE: ARTISTS & PLACES** A fascinating selection of work, including photographs by Kate Mellor and Rick Barks, paintings by Robert Perry and Catherine Brennand and textiles by Rachel Grant, until Sun 26 Feb

### Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery

**NEW RHYME AROUND THE WORLD** Featuring artwork by best-loved, best-selling and acclaimed illustrators, including; Robert Ingpen, Shirley Hughes, Axel Scheffler, Emily Gravett, Mini Grey, Jessica Ahlberg, and Polly Dunbar, Sat 18 Feb - Sun 7 May

### VAN Gallery, Shrewsbury

**NEW STREET GALLERY MIXED MEDIA** Showcase of members' work, including painting, textiles, ceramics, enamelling, digital art and sculpture, Sat 4 - Sat 25 Feb

**NEW TOM CRAIG & PAUL JANCZYKOWSKI** Exhibition of photographs, paintings and sculpture, Mon 6 - Sat 18 Feb

### Wolverhampton Art Gallery

**NEW A CURIOUS TURN** Moving mechanical sculpture is brought to

life in an exhibition featuring 30 pieces of extraordinary automata, Sat 18 Feb - Sun 21 May

### Other VISUAL ARTS

**QUBE CREATIVE GROUP GALLERY** A collection of works created by many of those who attended art classes over the past year, until Tues 7 Feb, Qube Gallery, Oswestry

**REBUILDING UTOXETER: ITS MUSEUM AND ITS PEOPLE** Artist Jennifer Collier uses paper copies of historical documents based on the life of Francis Redfern to inspire various artworks, until Sat 11 Feb, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**SCENES OF WEM** Two local art groups present a group exhibition of work inspired by Wem and the surrounding areas, until Thurs 23 Feb, Wem Town Hall

**DESIGN AND DESIRE: THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851** Objects and images, including prints and paintings from the Elton Collection, tell the story of how the Great Exhibition became one of the most influential and renowned events of the 19th century, until Fri 24 Feb, Coalbrookdale Gallery, Telford

**CHINESE OPERA PUPPETS** The exhibition looks at the opera string puppets from the southern region, including Hong Kong, which can be traced back as far as 1190, until Fri 31 Mar, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

**WINTER EXHIBITION** Featuring regular exhibitors alongside some new names. Included are stained glass from Tamsin Abbott, flower studies from David Stoves and sculpture from Tania Mosse, until Spring 2017, Silk Top Hat Gallery, Ludlow

**NEW OW BIST** Showcasing some of the works produced so far, as well as a selection of photos from some of the classes, Fri 10 - Mon 27 Feb, Qube Gallery, Oswestry

**NEW COMIC CON MIDLANDS** Explore a Comic Village packed with artists and writers, enjoy colourful costumes in the Cosplay Masquerade and meet special guests from the worlds of TV and film, Sat 11 Feb, Telford International Centre

**NEW ALAN FERNIHOUGH** A local artist whose paintings of local scenes takes us back to the 1960s and beyond. Alan also specialises in hyper-realistic pencil drawings, Fri 17 Feb - Sat 18 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**NEW HMP DOVEGATE** Exhibition of work produced in the art and ceramic classes by the prisoners as part of their education, Fri 17 Feb - Sat 18 Mar, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**NEW THREE COUNTIES OPEN PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION 2017** Images by talented photographers from Staffordshire, Cheshire and Shropshire, Wed 22 Feb - Wed 29 Mar, Keele University



Half Man Half Biscuit - The Robin

## Gigs

**RAY COOPER** Wed 1 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**BARBARA DICKSON** Wed 1 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**KNOXVILLE HIGHWAY** Wed 1 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY** Wed 1 Feb, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

**TOM WALKER TRIO** Wed 1 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**LIVE DEAD 69** Wed 1 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**KATHRYN WILLIAMS & ANTHONY KERR** Wed 1 Feb, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT** Thurs 2 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**MENACE BEACH** Thurs 2 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BLACK SABBATH** Thurs 2 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

**THE ROY ORBISON STORY** Thurs 2 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**SEAWAY** Thurs 2 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

**HEALTHY JUNKIES** Thurs 2 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**THE DEEP PURPLE FAMILY TREE** Fri 3 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE WONDER YEARS** Fri 3 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**DEFINITELY MIGHTBE & ADORED** Fri 3 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**ABBA MANIA** Fri 3 Feb, New Alexandra

Theatre, Birmingham

**KINGS OV LEON** Fri 3 Feb, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**THE LEGENDS OF AMERICAN COUNTRY** Fri 3 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**FREE AT LAST** Fri 3 Feb, Route 44, Birmingham

**DONNY OSMOND** Fri 3 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

**THEM HEAVY PEOPLE - KATE BUSH TRIBUTE** Fri 3 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**WHITNEY - QUEEN OF THE NIGHT** Fri 3 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**HERMITAGE GREEN** Fri 3 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**CHRIS BEVINGTON AND FRIENDS** Fri 3 Feb, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

**INTO THE HURRICANE** Fri 3 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**THE FALLEN STATE** Fri 3 Feb, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**GROUPE** Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**KEITH JAMES: THE SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN** Sat 4 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**GOODNIGHT LENIN** Sat 4 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**STEVE CLAYTON AND THE 44\$** Sat 4 Feb, Lichfield Guildhall

**THE SMITHS LTD** Sat 4 Feb, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**NATHAN CARTER** Sat 4 Feb, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**VOODOO VEGAS** Sat 4 Feb, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

**SWEDE DREAMZ** Sat 4 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**BLACK SABBATH** Sat 4 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

**KALEO** Sat 4 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**G2 DEFINITIVE GENESIS** Sat 4 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**MONTPARNASSE** Sat 4 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**THE CLAUSE** Sat 4 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham

**PETER AND THE TEST TUBE BABIES, SUCKERPUNCH, THE NERKS & THE YOUTH WITHIN** Sat 4 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**SARAH COLLINS AND KEEP THE FAITH** Sat 4 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**MIKEY PLUS SUPPORT FROM SAINT LEONARD'S HORSES & JOSEPH HICKLIN** Sat 4 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SAUL ROSE & JAMES DELARRE** Sun 5 Feb, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**KARNATAKA** Sun 5 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**BLACK PEAKS** Sun 5 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**INNI K AND JESS MORGAN** Sun 5 Feb, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**CLASSIC ROCK SHOW** Sun 5 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**HATTIE BRIGGS TRIO** Sun 5 Feb, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury



## Classical Music

**BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH** Featuring Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla (conductor), Francesco Piemontesi (piano) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Haydn, Mozart & Beethoven, Sun 29 Jan - Thurs 2 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



### THE LORD LIEUTENANT OF SHROPSHIRE'S CHARITY CONCERT

Featuring the Band & Bugles of the Rifle Regiment & singer Iona Fisher, Wed 1 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE ROYAL LIVERPOOL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA** Featuring Vasily Petrenko (conductor) & Daniil Trifonov (piano). Programme includes works by Stravinsky, Rachmaninov & Prokofiev, Wed 1 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**SENIOR CITIZENS ORCHESTRA** Thurs 2 Feb, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

**LIEBESLIEDER** Featuring Elouise Waterhouse (mezzo-soprano), Elise Fairley (soprano), Richard James (tenor), Andrew Randall (bass), Bernard Tann & Petrina Phua (accompanists) & James Gribble (reader), Thurs 2 Feb, Birmingham Conservatoire

**PIANO QUINTETS WITH CEDRIC TIBERGHIAN** Also featuring Emmet Byrne (oboe); Oliver Janes (clarinet), Michael Kidd (horn) & Margaret Cookhorn (bassoon), Programme includes works by Mozart & Beethoven, Fri 3 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**PIANO RECITAL WITH PETER DONOHOE** Programme includes works by Chopin, Scriabin, Schumann & Schubert, Fri 3 Feb, Alington Hall, Shrewsbury School



**ULRICH HEINEN LUNCHTIME CONCERT** Programme comprises Stockhausen's Tierkreis (Zodiac) & JS Bach's Suite No. 6 in D. BWV1012, Fri 3 Feb, The Barber Institute, B'ham

**JOHN WILLIAMS AT THE OSCARS** Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Michael Seal

(conductor) & Tommy Pearson (presenter), Fri 3 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**PIANISTS FROM CHETHAM'S SCHOOL OF MUSIC** Fri 3 Feb, St Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

**EX CATHEDRA: PURCELL DIDO & AENEAS** Featuring Greg Skidmore (Aeneas), Angela Hicks (Belinda), Martha McLorinan (Sorceress), Amy Wood (First Witch), Elizabeth Adams (Second Witch) & Jeremy Budd (Sailor), Sun 5 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**THERE WILL BE BLOOD: LIVE** Featuring the London Contemporary Orchestra, Hugh Brunt (conductor), Cynthia Millar (Ondes Martenot), Galya Bisengalieva (violin) & Oliver Coates (cello), Sun 5 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

## Comedy Gigs

**TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, ALLYSON JUNE SMITH & MARK OLVER** Wed 1 Feb, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**JOSH HOWIE** Thurs 2 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**GARY LITTLE, DAVE FULTON & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 2 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

**ANDREW BIRD, ADAM KAY, WAYNE BEESE & JAMES SHERWOOD** Thurs 2 Feb, The George Hotel, Lichfield



**MARK MAIER, SCOTT BENNETT, CHE BURNLEY, ROGER SWIFT & JAMES COOK** Thurs 2 Feb, Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs

**KUM-N-AVALOFF COMEDY NIGHT** Thurs 2 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**JONATHAN PIE** Fri 3 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**IAN STIRLING** Fri 3 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROB AUTON** Fri 3 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**IMRAN YUSUF, GEORGE RIGDEN & DAMIAN KINGSLEY** Fri 3 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**AURIE STYLA, QUINCY, KEVIN J & ROADMAN DAVID** Fri 3 Feb, mac, B'ham

**DAVE FULTON, GARY LITTLE, JENNY COLLIER & CHARLIE BAKER** Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**FREDDIE FARRELL, SALLY-ANNE HAYWARD & TOPPING AND BUTCH** Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb, Jongleurs, Birmingham

**GAVIN WEBSTER, LARRY DEAN, MARK NELSON & DARRELL MARTIN** Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**SHAZIA MIRZA** Sat 4 Feb, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 4 Feb, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**JUNIOR JESTERS #7** Sun 5 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**ANDRE VINCENT, JAY FOREMAN, JASPER CROMWELL JONES & KAREN BAILEY** Sun 5 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**DAVID O'DOHERTY** Sun 5 - Mon 6 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

## Theatre

**LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER** New staging of DH Lawrence's most famous novel, until Fri 3 Feb, The Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**BUDDY - THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY** Award-winning musical, until Sat 4 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**EVITA** Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Tim Rice's third major collaboration opened to rave reviews way back in the late 1970s, and has since garnered a reputation as one of the greatest musicals ever to grace West End and Broadway stages, until Sat 4 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN** Based on Chaucer's The Knight's Tale, The Two Noble Kinsmen is attributed to John Fletcher & William Shakespeare and is best described as a tragicomedy exploring the intoxication and strangeness of love, until Tues 7 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE SEVEN ACTS OF MERCY** Anders Lustgarten's visceral new play, which confronts the dangerous necessity of compassion, in a world where it is in short supply. Directed by RSC Deputy Artistic Director Erica Whyman, until Fri 10 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**THE ROVER** Aphra Behn's anarchic restoration comedy, rich with seduction, intrigue and danger, set in the topsy-turvy world of the carnival, until Sat 11 Feb, The Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

**LOVE** New play from Alexander Zeldin, written through a devising process in which the audience are invited to bear witness to an intimate story of 'family love for our times', until Sat 11 Feb, The REP, B'ham

**FRANKENSTEIN** The Crescent Theatre Company presents a staging of Mary Shelley's gothic tale, until Sat 11 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, B'ham

**WHAT'S IN A NAME?** Nigel Harman & Sarah Hadland star in the premiere of Jeremy Sams' stage adaptation of the French film and stage sensation, Le Prenom, until Sat 11 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

**MARY SHELLEY** The Crescent Theatre Company presents Helen Edmundson's compelling drama about the life of one of the world's most famous writers of Gothic fiction, until Sat 11 Feb, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**CHEKHOV'S SHORTS** European Arts present an entertaining collection of one-act farces by Anton Chekhov, including The Evils Of Tobacco, The Dimwit, The Bear, Swan Song and The Proposal, Wed 1 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ROUND THE HORNE** Based on the vintage BBC radio comedy sketch show, Wed 1 Feb, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**DAD'S ARMY** The Lichfield Players present an amateur performance of the classic comedy, Wed 1 - Sat 4 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**THAT'LL BE THE DAY** Featuring a new line-up of classic gold hits from the '50s through to the '70s, Thurs 2 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

**MORBID CURIOSITIES** Don't Go Into The Cellar presents a portmanteau of vintage blood-curdlers, featuring all-new adaptations of The Yellow Wallpaper, The Old Nurse's Story and John Charrington's Wedding, Thurs 2 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**WRECKING BALL** Funny, surreal and unsettling new play which explores how the subtle abuses of power shape our relationships, Thurs 2 - Sat 4 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

**DAME NATURE - THE MAGNIFICENT BEARDED LADY** An evening of stories and characters for audiences who don't like to judge a woman by her beard, Fri 3 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**CYRANO** Swashbuckling tale of unrequited love, set in the golden age of musketeers, Fri 3 - Sat 25 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**CHECK-IN** Grand Arena Youth Theatre presents a devious piece which explores what happens when the online and physical worlds collide, Sat 4 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**THE TOMMY COOPER SHOW** Daniel Taylor's portrayal of the showbusiness legend, Sat 4 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**THE FIZZOGS SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR** Sat 4 Feb, The Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

**LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER** Blue Orange Arts present a new staging of DH Lawrence's most famous novel, Sat 4 Feb, Lichfield Garrick



# WHAT'S ON AT THEATRE SEVERN...

SAT 11 FEB

## IAIN STIRLING ONWARDS!

The voice of ITV2's *Love Island* and Scotland's hottest comedy newcomer, explores the function and perception of twentysomethings within today's society.



TUE 14 FEB

## BARBARA DICKSON

Multi-million selling recording artist Barbara Dickson returns with her accomplished band to perform a range of material.



SAT 18 FEB



Returning after sold-out dates in 2014 and 2015 to perform classic hits including *Sherry*, *Walk Like A Man*, and *Big Girls Don't Cry*.

TUE 21 FEB



NDCWales's Artistic Director Caroline Finn takes us on a nostalgic journey. On this twisted TV set, characters discover the very fine line between fantasy and reality. With post-show talk.

SUN 19 FEB

## JUSTIN MOORHOUSE PEOPLE AND FEELINGS

From *Live at the Apollo*, *Phoenix Nights* and *Fighting Talk*.



FRI 24 FEB

Soul Man? Natural Woman? This feel good show revives the songs you love by Earth Wind & Fire, Barry White, Michael Jackson, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, Tina Turner and more.



CHECK THE [WEBSITE](#) FOR FULL LISTINGS



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THEATRE SEVERN, FRANKWELL QUAY, SHREWSBURY SY3 8FT

# FEBRUARY HALF TERM

Wrap up warm and join us this February half term for some Winter fun in the gardens.

**20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

There will be lots of fun activities for all weathers such as: Arts & Crafts, Bug Hunting and Story Trails!

For more information please contact reception or visit us at:  
[birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk/whatson](http://birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk/whatson)

Find us on:

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## A Great Night Out!

For non-stop entertainment every Thursday and Saturday evening, why not experience the thrills and excitement of greyhound racing at Monmore Green Stadium.

*It's action all the way from the moment the dogs leave the traps right up to the winning line. You can pre-book a package or just turn up on the night with friends and family for general admission into the Stadium.*

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# Ladbrokes

**SHARK IN THE PARK!** A fin-tastic family musical, from the creative team behind The Hairy Maclary Show, in which audiences can see all of Nick Sharratt's Shark In The Park! stories performed live on stage, Sun 5 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**THE JUNGLE BOOK** Oddsocks bring their inimitable humour to Rudyard Kipling's empowering story, Sun 5 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

## Dance

**SCATTERED** Motionhouse Dance Theatre fuse physical dance theatre, mesmerising aerial imagery and film graphics to explore our relationship with water in all its forms, Tues 31 Jan - Fri 3 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham



**THE NUTCRACKER** The Russian State Ballet Of Siberia presents one of the most famous fantasy ballets of all time... Sun 5 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



**SWAN LAKE** Presented by St Petersburg Ballet Theatre, Sun 5 - Mon 6 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**T2 TRAINSPOTTING (tbc)** Drama/Comedy. Starring Ewan McGregor, Kelly Macdonald. Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham, until Thurs 2 Feb; Light House Media Centre, Wolverhampton, until Thurs 2 Feb

**THE LIGHT BETWEEN OCEANS (12)**

Drama/Romance. Starring Michael Fassbender & Alicia Vikander. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 2 Feb

**THE BIRTH OF A NATION (15)** Biography/Drama. Starring Nate Parker & Armie Hammer. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, until Thurs 2 Feb

**CITIZENFOUR (15)** Documentary. Starring Edward Snowden. Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Wed 1 Feb

**THE EAGLE HUNTRESS (U)** Documentary. Starring Aisholpan Nurgaiv & Daisy Ridley. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 1 Feb

**THE MUSIC OF STRANGERS (U)** Documentary/Music. Starring Yo-Yo Ma & Kinan Azmeh. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Wed 1 Feb

**LIFE, ANIMATED (PG)** Documentary. Starring Jonathan Freeman & Gilbert Gottfried. Stoke Film Theatre, Thurs 2 Feb

**COLLATERAL BEAUTY (12a)** Drama. Starring Will Smith & Edward Norton. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 3 Feb

**SULLY (12a)** Biography/Drama. Starring Tom Hanks & Aaron Eckhart. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Thurs 2 Feb; Stoke Film Theatre, Fri 3 - Sat 4 Feb

**LION (PG)** Drama. Starring Rooney Mara, Nicole Kidman & Dev Patel. mac, Birmingham, Fri 3 - Thurs 9 Feb

**ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY (12a)** Adventure/Sci-Fi. Starring Felicity Jones & Diego Luna. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Fri 3 - Sat 4, Tues 7 & Thurs 8 Feb

**SILENCE (15)** Drama/History. Starring Andrew Garfield & Liam Neeson. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 3 - Thurs 9 Feb

**A MONSTER CALLS (12a)** Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sigourney Weaver & Felicity Jones. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 3 - Thurs 9 Feb

**THE ANGRY BIRDS MOVIE (U)** Animation/Action. With the voices of Jason Sudeikis & Josh Gad. mac, Birmingham, Sat 4 Feb

**GHOSTS (15)** Adventure/Drama. Starring Zhan Yu, Tao Li & Ai Qin Lin. Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Sun 5 Feb

**42ND STREET (U)** Comedy/Musical. Starring Ruby Keeler & Ginger Rogers. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sun 5 Feb

**THE PASS (15)** Drama. Starring Russell Tovey & Arinze Kene. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Sun 5 Feb

### NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 3 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

**GOLD (tbc)**

**LOVING (12a)**

**RESIDENT EVIL: THE FINAL CHAPTER (15)**

**RINGS (15)**

**TONI ERDMANN (15)**



## The Jungle Book

The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Sun 5 February; Lichfield Garrick, Sat 25 February

Although zany funsters Oddsocks are probably best known for their humorous takes on the works of William Shakespeare, they occasionally like to shake things up a bit by looking for their inspiration elsewhere. This is one such occasion.

Made universally popular by the classic Walt Disney movie, Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book tells the story of a young boy named Mowgli who's been raised in the jungle by a family of wolves. His friends, Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther, are determined to save him from the evil intentions of Shere Khan the tiger.

But keeping Mowgli safe is no walk in the jungle, as his two furry pals soon find out...

## Events

**ALICE TRAIL** Can you solve the clues on this Alice In Wonderland trail and find the special plates hidden around the museum?, Wed 1 - Tues 28 Feb, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

**HOW TO TELL A BEDTIME STORY** As part of National Storytelling Week, this fun workshop for parents, grandparents and carers is packed full of ideas to use with children, Thurs 2 Feb, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, South Shropshire

**BOWMAN ANTIQUES** The best selection of antiques, curios, vintage, retro and collectables in the West Midlands. Up to 400 stalls, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Feb, Staffordshire County Showground

**CRAFTPLAY SATURDAYS** Create, make and play in Craftplay's weekend sessions, Sat 4 Feb, Bilston Craft Gallery, Wolverhampton

**SPECIALIST TALK: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SIMEON SOLOMON** This new talk for 2017 provides a detailed look at the exclusive collection of Simeon Solomon's paintings, Sat 4 Feb, Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton

**SPRING WEEKEND CONSERVATION TOURS** Find out about the special conservation work the team have been doing over the winter, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Feb, Chirk Castle, nr Wrexham

**SPACE EXPLORERS** Drop in to this space-themed craft activity and have a go at making and testing a stomp rocket, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Feb, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

**FAMILY STARGAZING AND MOONWATCH** Join Shropshire Astronomical Society for an evening of stargazing and moonwatching. Suitable for all the family, Sat 4 - Sun 5 Feb, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

**WEM TOWN HALL WEDDING FAYRE** Sun 5 Feb, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

**ANTIQUE FAIR** Sun 5 Feb, Bantock House & Park, Wolverhampton

**CHINESE NEW YEAR OF THE ROOSTER** This colourful and vibrant festival includes traditional dragon and lion dances, firecrackers, magic, acrobats and Chinese folk dancing, Sun 5 Feb, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent



### Gigs

#### INNI K AND JESS

**MORGAN** Mon 6 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**MACKA B AND THE ROOTS RAGGA BAND** Mon 6 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**CHELSEA GRIN** Tues 7 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**HOWIE PAYNE** Tues 7 Feb, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**GRINGO STAR** Tues 7 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**NORTH SEA GAS** Tues 7 Feb, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**GOSPEL CENTRAL** Wed 8 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**UNION J** Wed 8 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**PHIL BEER** Wed 8 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**PHOENIX RISING** Wed 8 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**YOU WIN AGAIN - THE STORY OF THE BEE GEES** In words and music, Wed 8 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**GEORGE MONBIOT AND EWAN MCLENNAN** Wed 8 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**STEVE KNIGHTLEY** Wed 8 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TOM GRENNAN + CUCKOOLANDER** Wed 8 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**THE BREW & PISTON** Wed 8 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**BOXED IN** Wed 8 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**PILL** Wed 8 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE BLUES BAND** Featuring Paul Jones, Tom McGuinness, Dave Kelly, Rob Townsend & Gary Fletcher, Thurs 9 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**KENT DUCHAINE** Thurs 9 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**UNION J** Thurs 9 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**NATTY** Thurs 9 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**INHEAVEN PLUS FREAK** Thurs 9 Feb, The Slade

Rooms, Wolverhampton

**CABBAGE** Thurs 9 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ANTHRAX** Thurs 9 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**HIGH VALLEY** Thurs 9 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TRANSATLANTIC SESSIONS** Thurs 9 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE GRUFFS** Thurs 9 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**WORRY DOLLS** Thurs 9 Feb, The Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire

**THE GODFATHERS** Fri 10 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THE BOSS & BRYAN ADAMS EXPERIENCE** Fri 10 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**UK GUNS N' ROSES** Fri 10 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**HANNAH & BRIAN** Fri 10 Feb, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**INHEAVEN PLUS FREAK** Fri 10 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**BREAK STUFF** Fri 10 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

**VOODOO SIOUX** Fri 10 Feb, Route 44, Birmingham

**SOTO & VANADINE** Fri 10 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**FOOR** Fri 10 Feb, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**CULT FICTION & IRON 2 MAIDEN** Fri 10 Feb, The Roadhouse, B'ham

**LEKAN BABALOLA'S SACRED FUNK** Fri 10 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DREADZONE** Sat 11 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**AMBER RUN** Sat 11 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**BLUE NATION** Sat 11

Feb, Route 44, B'ham

**MICHAELA WYLDE** Sat 11 Feb, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**OACEIS & THE JAM DR** Sat 11 Feb, The Roadhouse, B'ham

**SUNDARA KARMA** Sat 11 Feb, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**THREE BLIND MICE** Sat 11 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**THE MODFATHERS** Sat 11 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**STONE BROKEN** Sat 11 Feb, Route 44, Birmingham

**BACK TO BACHARACH** Sat 11 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire

**NOUGHTY NINETIES** Sat 11 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**STRANGE BONES AND BLACKWATERS** Sat 11 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**MIKE GARRY** Sat 11 Feb, The Wightman Theatre, Shrewsbury

**FISHERMAN'S FRIENDS** Sat 11 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE JOKERS** Sat 11 Feb, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

**ENDEAVOUR, PULVERISE, GENESIS ARC & SECRETS OF MARIANA** Sat 11 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**DAN SHAKE** Sat 11 Feb, Hare & Hounds, B'ham

**JULIAN COPE** Sun 12 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**BROOKS WILLIAMS** Sun 12 Feb, Kitchen Garden Cafe, B'ham

**KATE NASH** Sun 12 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**TALON...THE ACOUSTIC COLLECTION** Sun 12 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ALTERED BRIDGE** Sun 12 Feb, The Roadhouse, Birmingham



Union J - The Sugarmill

### Classical Music

**NOBUKO IMAI (VIOLA) IN CONCERT** Also featuring Robert Markham (piano). Programme comprises Brahms' E minor Sonata for Cello & Piano (arr viola) & Franck's Sonata for Viola & Piano, Tues 7 Feb, Birmingham Conservatoire

**HOLST'S THE PLANETS** Featuring the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the CBSO Youth Chorus & Nicholas Collon (conductor), Wed 8 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**CBSO CENTRE STAGE: BACH & HANDEL** Featuring Veronika Klišova (flute), Rainer Gibbons (oboe), Richard Jenkinson (cello) & Martin Perkins (continuo). Programme includes works by Bach & Handel, Thurs 9 Feb, CBSO Centre, Birmingham

**LA BOHEME** OperaUpClose present Robert Norton-Hale's new English version of Puccini's tale of two couples which powerfully evidences the fact that love may not necessarily always conquer all, Thurs 9 Feb - Sat 11 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**ANGELA HEWITT PLAYS BACH** Fri 10 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall



**BBC PHILHARMONIC** Featuring Jamie Phillips (conductor) & Adam Walker (soloist). Programme includes works by Haydn, Mozart & Sibelius, Fri 10 Feb, Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

**NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE** Featuring Daniel Rosina (director). Programme includes works by David Ōnaġ, Fumiko Miyachi & Sebastiano Dessanay, Fri 10 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSICS** The CBSO perform Cole Porter: Let's Do It, featuring Roderick Dunk (conductor) & Anna O'Byrne, Caroline Sheen, David Thaxton & Scott Davies (vocalists), Fri 10 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONIC BRASS** Featuring Stephen Roberts (director), Sun 12 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**TIM & TOM'S SYMPHONIC ADVENTURE** Family Concert presented by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and featuring Timothy Redmond (conductor) & Tom Redmond (presenter). Programme includes works by Mozart, Wagner, Rossini, Williams & Hindson, Sun 12 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

### Comedy Gigs

**FAT PENGUIN COMEDY** Wed 8 Feb, The Patrick Kavanagh, Birmingham

**DEBRA-JANE APPELBY, MAUREEN YOUNGER PLUS COMIC TBC** Wed 8 Feb, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**JEN BRISTER, SCOTT GIBSON & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 9 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ANDY WATSON, ROGER SWIFT, DAVE POLLARD & DAVE BRYON** Thurs 9 Feb, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**SUSAN MURRAY & GARETH BERLINER** Fri 10 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Fri 10 Feb, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**JAMES REDMOND, SEAN PERCIVAL & COMIC TBC** Fri 10 Feb, Jongleurs, Birmingham

**TOM WRIGGLESWORTH, ANDY ROBINSON, SCOTT GIBSON & JEN BRISTER** Fri 10 - Sat 11 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DANA ALEXANDER, MANDY KNIGHT, JONNY AWSUM & ADAM STAUNTON** Fri 10 - Sat 11 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**MATT FORDE** Sat 11 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**IAN STIRLING** Sat 11 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**JAMES REDMOND, SEAN PERCIVAL & DAVID WHITNEY** Sat 11 Feb, Jongleurs, Birmingham

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 11 Feb, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**ROSS NOBLE** Sun 12 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Shropshire



**JOHN SHUTTLEWORTH** Sun 12 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

### Theatre

**BIANCA DEL RIO: NOT TODAY SATAN** Season Six winner of RuPaul's Drag Race, the self-professed 'clown in a gown' brings her new stand-up show to the UK, Mon 6 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**IN THE MOTHERHOOD** New play by Hayley Pepper which journeys into the world of competitive parenting, Mon 6 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**THE FULL MONTY** Sheffield Theatres

# Monday 6 - Sunday 12 February

present a staged version of Simon Beaufoy's award-winning film, Mon 6 - Sat 11 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**WONDERLAND** Wendi Peters, Dave Willetts & Kerry Ellis star in Frank Wildhorn's musical adaptation of Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures In Wonderland and Through The Looking Glass, Mon 6 - Sat 11 Feb, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**ENTERTAINING ANGELS** Amateur production of Richard Everett's very English comedy, Tues 7 - Sat 11 Feb, Stoke Repertory Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**YOU WIN AGAIN** The Story of the Bee Gees in words and music, Wed 8 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK: THE ROD STEWART STORY** New theatrical production celebrating the career of one of rock's greatest icons, Rod Stewart - from street busker through to international superstar! Wed 8 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**FICTION** Fuel Theatre present an immersive theatrical experience which takes place in total darkness and explores the areas where sleep and wakefulness meet, Thurs 9 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton



**HALFWAY TO PARADISE - THE BILLY FURY STORY** Musical which charts the rise to fame of a shy young boy from Liverpool who became one of Britain's best-loved rock stars.

Timeless hits featured in the show include I Will, Jealousy, It's Only Make Believe and, of course, Halfway To Paradise, Thurs 9 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**URSULA** Tom Mansfield directs Howard Barker's play, which 'drives a dagger into the meeting points of the sacred and the profane, the body and the soul', Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Feb, George Cadbury Hall, University of Birmingham

**THE FIZZOGS' SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR**



Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Feb, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, Shropshire

**LA BOHEME** OperaUpClose present Robert Norton-Hale's new English version of Puccini's magnificent tale of two couples, powerfully evidenc-

ing the fact that love may not necessarily always conquer all, Thurs 9 Sat - 11 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**STORIES TO TELL IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT** Storytelling with a difference, presented as a live, late-night radio show for those who aren't asleep. Instead of records, the DJ spins stories that exist between dusk and morning, Thurs 9 - Sat 18 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

**SPACE WARS - THE PANTO FIGHTS BACK!** Thurs 9 - Sat 11 Feb, Buildwas Village Hall, Ironbridge, Shropshire

**HER** Compelling story of a 15-year-old London girl who inexplicably finds that conflict has made her an alien in her own country, Fri 10 Feb, Newhampton Arts Centre, Wolverhampton

**STAND BY ME** A celebration of Ben E King and The Drifters, Fri 10 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**SHE** Arena Collaborative Theatremakers present a drama which explores what drives us to violence when a woman with a dark potential is pushed too far, Fri 10 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**BEN & HOLLY'S LITTLE KINGDOM** Musical adventure for young audiences, featuring games, songs and laughter, Fri 10 - Sat 11 Feb, Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton

**THE GUIDE TO BEING SINGLE** Musical comedy about unlucky-in-love twentysomethings who conclude that the solution to their relationship problems is to stay single... Due to some of the content, this show is recommended for those over the age of 14, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**THE GOON SHOW** Birmingham Comedy Festival and Fred Theatre present a rare chance to see two classic Spike Milligan radio scripts on stage, complete with live sound



effects and jazz band, Sat 11 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**CALIFORNIA SCHEMING** One woman's poetic narrative about a lifelong fascination with America, Sat 11 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE** New play by Kay Wootton which centres around a woman and her closest friends as they struggle to figure out the difference between what they need, what they want, and what they get, Sat 11 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**CHINESE NEW YEAR EXTRAVAGANZA** Showcase of Chinese performing arts, featuring 'the cheerful spirit of the auspicious Lion Dance and awe-inspiring contortion', Sun 12 Feb,



Chinese New Year Extravaganza - Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE GOON SHOW** Birmingham Comedy Festival and Fred Theatre present a rare chance to see two classic Spike Milligan radio scripts on stage, complete with live sound effects and jazz band, Sun 12 Feb, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

**COLLATERAL BEAUTY (12a)** Drama. Starring Will Smith & Edward Norton. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 6 - Tues 7 Feb

**SILENCE (15)** Drama/History. Starring Andrew Garfield & Liam Neeson. mac, Birmingham, Sun 12 - Thurs 16 Feb



## Dance

**SWAN LAKE** The Russian State Ballet Of Siberia presents its version of the greatest romantic ballet of all time, brought to life by Tchaikovsky's haunting and unforgettable score, Mon 6 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**COPPELIA** The Russian State Ballet Of Siberia presents the story of the doll-maker Coppélius, whose greatest desire is to make a doll with a soul, Tues 7 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**TELFORD DANCE SHOW** Bringing together young talent from various dance schools across the region, Tues 7 - Wed 8 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

**THE RED SHOES** Tues 7 - Sat 11 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

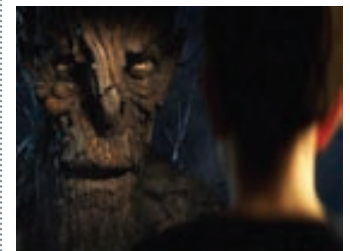
**HUNT FOR THE WILDERPEOPLE (12a)** Adventure/Comedy. Starring Sam Neill & Julian Dennison. Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Tues 7 Feb

**FRANCOFONIA (12a)** Documentary/Drama. Starring Louis-Do de Lencquesaing & Benjamin Utzerath. Foreign language, subtitles. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Thurs 9 Feb

**A SPARKLE OF LIFE (tbc)** Drama. Starring Kazuko Yoshiyuki & Akira Takarada. Foreign language, subtitles. mac, Birmingham, Fri 10 Feb

**FIFTY SHADES DARKER (18)** Drama/Romance. Starring Dakota Johnson & Jamie Dornan. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, from Fri 10 Feb

**A MONSTER CALLS (12a)** Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sigourney Weaver & Felicity Jones. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Fri 10 Feb



## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**BRIDGET JONES'S BABY (15)** Comedy/Romance. Starring Renée Zellweger & Colin Firth. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 6 Feb

**CALAMITY JANE (U)** Comedy/Musical. Starring Doris Day & Howard Keel. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Mon 6 Feb

**PRECIOUS BANE (PG)** Drama/History. Starring John Bowe & Janet McTeer. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 6 Feb



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WWW.HENRYTUDORHOUSE.COM

SUNDAY 5th FEBRUARY



HATTIE  
BRIGGS

SUNDAY 12th FEBRUARY



THE GOON  
SHOW

SUNDAY 19th FEBRUARY



TONY  
O'MALLEY

THURSDAY 23rd FEBRUARY



THE  
GRAHAMS

THE AWARD WINNING  
MUSIC & COMEDY  
VENUE  
IN SHROPSHIRE

What's  
on...



Friday 10th February  
**ALL STAR SUPERSLAM  
WRESTLING 2017**  
Time: 7.30pm



Saturday 18th February  
**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE**  
Time: 7.30pm



Saturday 25th February  
**JACK FROST**  
Time: 3.00pm

3+



Wednesday 1st March  
**CILLA AND THE SHADES  
OF THE 60'S**  
Time: 7.30pm



Friday 3rd March  
**THE CLONE ROSES WITH  
SAVANNAH**  
Time: 7.30pm

18+



Wednesday 8th March  
**VIENNA FESTIVAL BALLETS  
CINDERELLA**  
Time: 7.00pm

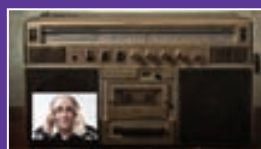


Friday 10th March  
**THE SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR**  
Time: 7.30pm

14+



Saturday 11th March  
**YOU WIN AGAIN - THE STORY  
OF THE BEE GEES**  
Time: 7.30pm



Thursday 16th March  
**DANNY BAKER  
CRADLE TO THE STAGE**  
Time: 7.30pm

14+

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# thelist

## PASSENGERS (12a)

Adventure/Drama. Starring Jennifer Lawrence & Chris Pratt. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Fri 10 - Sun 12 Feb

**DENIAL (12a)** Biography/Drama. Starring Rachel Weisz & Tom Wilkinson. mac, Birmingham, Fri 10 - Thurs 16 Feb

**MANCHESTER BY THE SEA (15)** Drama. Starring Casey Affleck & Kyle Chandler. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 10 - Thurs 16 Feb

**LADY & THE TRAMP (U)** Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Barbara Luddy & Larry Roberts. mac, Birmingham, Sat 11 Feb

**SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE (PG)** Drama/Romance. Starring Tom Hanks & Meg Ryan. mac, Birmingham, Sat 11 Feb

**THE WIZARD OF OZ (U)** Adventure/Fantasy. Starring Judy Garland & Frank Morgan. The Electric Cinema, Birmingham, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Feb

**SOME LIKE IT HOT (12)** Comedy/Romance. Starring Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis. mac, Birmingham, Sun 12 Feb

## NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 10 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

**20TH CENTURY WOMEN (15)**  
**BILLY LYNN'S LONG HALFTIME WALK (15)**

**FENCES (12a)**  
**FIFTY SHADES DARKER (tbc)**  
**THE SPACE BETWEEN US (tbc)**  
**THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE (tbc)**

## Events

**CRAFTPLAY EXPLORERS** Discover, play and create with your child. For children up to the age of five, Tues 7 Feb, Bilston Craft Gallery, Wolverhampton

**PROFESSOR EDWARD GREGSON LECTURE AND WORKSHOP** World-renowned British composer Professor Edward Gregson talks about his iconic works for brass band and conducts selected extracts with the Conservatoire Brass Band, Tues 7 Feb, St Paul's Church, Birmingham

**MIND BODY SPIRIT FESTIVAL LLANGOLLEN** More than 60 stalls offering alternative therapies, psychic one-to-one readings, complementary healing, meditation and more, Tues 7 Feb, Royal International Pavilion, Llangollen

**ENERGY NOW EXPO 2017** Bringing together farmers, landowners and other rural business owners

to engage with industry experts on the latest renewable-energy opportunities, Wed 8 - Thurs 9 Feb, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

**WIZARDS ASSEMBLE - THE BIRMINGHAM PUB CRAWL** Dress up in your best Harry Potter attire for a pub crawl around some of the city's best venues, Fri 10 Feb, various venues across Birmingham City Centre

**FRIDAY TWILIGHT - A MURDER MOST ROYAL** A night of romance, intrigue and murder at the court of Charles II, Fri 10 Feb, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

**BONE CHINA FLOWERMaking WORKSHOP** Join the expert flower-maker and make your own to take home, Sat 11 Feb, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

**MCM COMIC CON MIDLANDS** Featuring eSports competitions, a 'comic village' packed with artists and writers, colourful costumes in the Cosplay Masquerade and special guests from the worlds of TV and film, Sat 11 Feb, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

**SPRING WEEKEND CONSERVATION TOURS** Find out about the special conservation work the team have been doing over the winter, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Feb, Chirk Castle, nr Wrexham

**BRITISH FLY FAIR INTERNATIONAL** Featuring over 80 individual exhibitors and the largest selection of fly tying materials at any UK show, Sat 11 - Sun 12 Feb, Staffordshire County Showground

**CHARLOTTE'S WEB HALF-TERM TRAIL** Step back in time to the 1950s with this themed outdoor trail, Sat 11 - Sun 19 Feb, Croft Castle, nr Leominster

**PIRATE AND PRINCESS WEEK** Featuring a treasure hunt, CBeebies character meet-and-greets and a host of pirate and princess activities, Sat 11 - Sun 26 Feb, Alton Towers, Staffs



**TOY COLLECTORS FAIR** Explore 550 stands filled with all kinds of for-sale collectables from the UK's leading dealers, Sun 12 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**BANKS'S Robin 2**  
www.therobin.co.uk

WED 1 FEB FROM SAN FRANCISCO  
**GRATEFUL DEAD ALBUM LIVE DEAD 69**  
PERFORMED BY AN ALL-STAR BAND

THU 2 FEB + SUPPORT SONNENBERG  
**HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT**

FRI 3 FEB DEEP PURPLE FAMILY TREE  
**WHITESNAKE UK RAINBOW RISING PURE PURPLE**

SAT 4 FEB  
**G2 - DEFINITIVE GENESIS**

SUN 5 FEB  
**KARNATAKA**

MON 6 FEB  
**RIISING STAR REVISITED MACKA B**

WED 8 FEB  
**PHOENIX RISING**

THU 9 FEB  
**CANCELLED MOODY BLUES**

FRI 10 FEB DOUBLE HEADLINE SHOW  
**THE BOSS (SPRINGSTEEN) + BRYAN ADAMS EXPERIENCE**

SAT 11 FEB THIS TO PAUL WELLER  
**THE MODFATHERS**

SUN 12 FEB WITH HIS BAND  
**RAYMOND FROGGATT**

WED 15 FEB FROM THE ZOMBIES  
**COLIN BLUNSTONE**

THU 16 FEB + SUPPORT ZOE GREEN  
**WILLE & THE BANDITS**

FRI 17 FEB + SUPPORT NAIKED SUNDAY  
**BON GIOVI**

SAT 18 FEB  
**COUNTERFEIT STONES**

SUN 19 FEB 11.00am - 4.00pm  
**RECORD & CD FAIR**

SUN 19 FEB ALL SEATED SHOW  
**CHESNEY & CHIP HAWKES**  
THE THRESHOLDS TO THE ONE AND ONLY

WED 22 FEB AN ALL SEATED SHOW  
**PETE KENT**

THU 23 FEB + MATT EDWARDS BAND  
**IAN PARKER & HIS BAND**

FRI 24 FEB + THE BOIZ SAUCE INFUSION  
**THE BLOCKHEADS**

SAT 25 FEB  
**REACH OUT TO MOTOWN**  
FEATURING BOB G HEMMINGWAY


SUN 26 FEB  
**OYE SANTANA THE MUSIC OF SATANA**

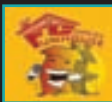
THU 28 FEB  
**CANCELLED BAND**

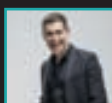
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arts centre & café bar


**SPRING 2017**


 3 February, 8pm  
**Aynsley Lister**  
Tickets: £10 (Adv), £12 (OTD)

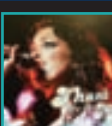
 9 February, 7.30pm  
**Funhouse Comedy Club**  
Tickets: £8 (Adv), £10 (OTD)


 15 February, 7.15pm  
**LEE NELSON - WORK IN PROGRESS TOUR**  
Tickets: £15


 21 - 25 February, 7.30pm  
6.30pm Wed, 2.30pm Thu & Sat Mat  
Burton Amateur Stage Entertainers  
**JACK AND THE BEANSTALK**  
Tickets: £12, £11 (Conc)  
£40 (Family of 4 - 2+2)


 2 March, 7.30pm  
**Michael George's London Varieties**  
Tickets: £14, £13.50 (Conc)

 8 March, 7.30pm  
European Arts Company  
**Chekov Shorts**  
Tickets: £10, £8 (Conc), £5 (Student)

 16 March, 7.30pm  
Thank You For the Music Presents  
**The Ultimate Tribute to Abba**  
Tickets: £20

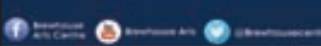
 18 March, 8pm  
**Tom Allen & Suzi Ruffell Hit the Road**  
Tickets: £12, £10 (Conc)

 4 & 5 April, 7pm  
**Theatre Ad Infinitum: Bucket List**  
Tickets: £12 plus 'bring a friend for free'

 7 April 7pm  
At Burton Town Hall  
**Bee Gees Fever**  
Tickets: £18 (Adv), £20 (OTD)

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### Gigs

**BLOOD & REALITY SLAP**  
Mon 13 Feb, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**LADYHAWKE** Mon 13 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham



**CATHOLIC ACTION** Mon 13 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**LEWIS & LEIGH** Mon 13 Feb, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**TERRORSAURS, KINGS OF HONG KONG, HANZO & X-RAY CAT TRIO** Tues 14 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

**TRIVIUM** Tues 14 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**BARBARA DICKSON** Tues 14 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ALPINES** Tues 14 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LITTLE COMETS** Wed 15 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**COLIN BLUNSTONE & BAND** Wed 15 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE BIG WOLF BAND** Wed 15 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**THE SHERLOCKS** Wed 15 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**THE CLASSIC ROCK SHOW - THE A-Z OF ROCK** Wed 15 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE FROE** Wed 15 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC** Wed 15 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**FAIRPORT CONVENTION** Wed 15 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

**FOUR YEAR STRONG** Thurs 16 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**WILLE AND THE BANDITS** Thurs 16 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE SHERLOCKS** Thurs 16 Feb, O2 Institute,

Birmingham  
**HIDDEN CHARMS + THE BAY RAYS** Thurs 16 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**LOYLE CARNER** Thurs 16 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**SAM JACKSON & THE STRUGGLES, ED GEATER, DAME & HOSANNAH** Thurs 16 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**BON GIOVI** Fri 17 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**THE RED LEMONS** Fri 17 - Sat 18 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**SOPHIE ELLIS BEXTOR** Fri 17 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**IN THE CARDS** Fri 17 Feb, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

**PAUL CARRACK** Fri 17 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**BARRY STEELE AS ROY ORBISON** Fri 17 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**CASH (PAYIN' RESPECT TO THE MAN IN BLACK)** Fri 17 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**THE MACHINE RAGES ON** Fri 17 Feb, The Roadhouse, B'ham

**SIGALA** Fri 17 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**JESSARAE** Fri 17 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**SPRING KING** Fri 17 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**LEANN RIMES** Fri 17 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**THE HUT PEOPLE** Fri 17 Feb, Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire

**BREABACH** Fri 17 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**DAVE BUSBY** Fri 17 Feb, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**THE PINK FLOYD SHOW** Fri 17 Feb, Theatre On The Steps, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**DREAMS OF FLEETWOOD MAC** Fri 17 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**THE RAT PACK** Fri 17

Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford, Shropshire  
**WORD OF MOTH** Fri 17 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**THE KILLERZ** Sat 18 Feb, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**QUADROPHENIA NIGHT** Featuring The Atlantics and DJ Drew Stansall (The Specials), Sat 18 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**IVOR & LYNN'S CLASSIC ROCK DISCO** Sat 18 Feb, Route 44, Birmingham

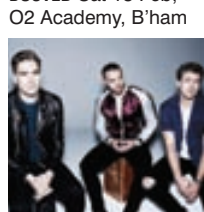
**THE BOSS UK** Sat 18 Feb, The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent

**WHITESNAKE UK** Sat 18 Feb, Eleven, Sandyford, Stoke-on-Trent

**NIBBS & EDDY** Sat 18 Feb, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**ELKIE BROOKS** Sat 18 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**BUSTED** Sat 18 Feb, O2 Academy, B'ham



**ULTIMATE 40 - UB40 TRIBUTE** Sat 18 Feb, The River Rooms, Stourbridge

**LET'S HANG ON** Sat 18 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**TEGAN AND SARA** Sat 18 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE BON JOVI EXPERIENCE** Sat 18 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

**RED DIRT SKINNERS** Sat 18 Feb, Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley, Shropshire

**MIC LOWRY** Sun 19 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**ARTFUL DODGER** Sun 19 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**AJ TRACEY** Sun 19 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**TONY O'MALLEY** Sun 19 Feb, Henry Tudor House, Shrewsbury

**PALM READER & TOY MOUNTAINS** Sun 19 Feb, The Flapper, Birmingham

### Classical Music

**THOMAS TROTTER LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT** Programme includes works by J.S Bach, C.P.E Bach, Ginastera, Schumann & Liszt, Mon 13 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**MARIAM BATSASHVILI IN RECITAL** Programme includes works by Bach/Busoni, Händel/Liszt & Mikel Urquiza, Mon 13 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**GAMELAN ENSEMBLE** Annual Dome concert featuring traditional music of Indonesia, Mon 13 Feb, The Bramall, Birmingham

**STEVEN OSBORNE: RACHMANINOV** Featuring Alexander Vedernikov (conductor), Steven Osborne (piano) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Rachmaninov & Tchaikovsky, Wed 15 - Thurs 16 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**DAN SPIRRETT NONET: OF MICE AND MEN** Featuring Dan Spirrett (saxophone/compositions), Josh Schofield (alto saxophone), Vittorio Mura (baritone saxophone & bass clarinet), Alex Stride (trumpet/flugelhorn), David Sear (trombone), Daniel Kemshell (guitar), Jacky Naylor (piano), Sam Ingvorsen (double bass) & Gwilym Jones (drums), Thurs 16 Feb, Birmingham Conservatoire

**PERSEPHASSA** Featuring directors Nick Petrella & Adrian Spillett & percussionists from CBSO & Birmingham Conservatoire. Programme comprises Steve Reich's Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices & Organ plus Iannis Xenakis' Persephassa, Fri 17 Feb, Birmingham Conservatoire

**CITY OF LONDON SINFONIA: THE DEVIL'S VIOLIN** Programme includes works by Vivaldi, Grainger, Piazzolla, Locatelli, Copland, Nocturne & Vivaldi, Fri 17 Feb, Alington Hall, Shrewsbury School

**ODYSSEUS PIANO TRIO** Featuring Sara Trickey (violin), Gregor Riddell (cello) & Clare Hammond (piano). Programme includes works by Haydn & Beethoven, Fri 17 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**FLUTE CHOIR & CLARINET CHOIR** Featuring Alex Chantrell (flute choir conductor) & Natasha Sofia (clarinet choir conductor), Sun 19 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

### Comedy Gigs

**TOM STADE, JAVIER JARQUIN, MICKEY SHARMA & LAURA LEXX** Tues 14 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**ROSS NOBLE** Wed 15 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**LEE NELSON** Wed 15 Feb, The Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

**CHEEKY MONKEY COMEDY** Wed 15 Feb, The Dark Horse, Moseley, B'ham

**JACK WHITEHALL** Thurs 16 Feb,

Genting Arena, Birmingham

**RH COMEDY** Thurs 16 Feb, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**TANYALEE DAVIS, CHRIS MARTIN, JAMES DOWDESWELL** Thurs 16 Feb, The Bramall, Birmingham

**ANDREW BIRD, JOHN MOLONEY & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 16 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MILES JUPP** Fri 17 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**JONATHAN PIE** Fri 17 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**JOSIE LONG** Fri 17 Feb, The Old Rep Theatre, Birmingham

**JAMES COOK, JOHNNY CANDON & SALLY-ANNE HEYWARD** Fri 17 Feb, Jongleurs, Birmingham

**AHIR SHAH & BILAL ZAFAR** Fri 17 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**DANA ALEXANDER, ANDREW BIRD, SEAN PERCIVAL & JOHN MOLONEY** Fri 17 - Sat 18 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**LLOYD GRIFFITH, SEAN MEO, ANDREW RYAN & GEOFF BOYZ** Fri 17 - Sat 18 Feb, The Comedy Loft, Birmingham

**DALISO CHAPONDA, MARVYN DICKINSON, GEORGE RIGDEN, DAMION LARKIN & COMIC TBC** Sat 18 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**MARK WATSON, JOE LYCETT, JONNY COLE & WAYNE BEESE** Sat 18 Feb, Brierley Hill Civic Hall

**JAMES COOK, JOHNNY CANDON & THANYIA MOORE** Sat 18 Feb, Jongleurs, Birmingham

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 18 Feb, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**JUSTIN MOORHOUSE** Sun 19 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

**SEAN MCLOUGHLIN** Sun 19 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**THE CHUCKLE SINGHS, DON BISWAS, HYDE PANASER, SINDHU VEE & INDER MANOCHA** Sun 19 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

### Theatre

**NORTHANGER ABBEY** Tim Luscombe's staging of Jane Austen's Gothic parody, Mon 13 - Wed 15 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE** Joanne Clifton & Michelle Collins star in a new



staging of the Tony Award-winning musical, which in turn is based on the 1967 film of the same name, Mon 13 - Sat 18 Feb, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**JAMIE RAVEN LIVE** An evening with 'one of the most viewed magicians in the world', Tues 14 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**MACBETH** Fred Theatre brings Shakespeare's tragedy of greed, lust and betrayal to life in a new and intimate production, Tues 14 - Wed 15 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S LONG LOST FIRST PLAY (ABRIDGED)** The Reduced Shakespeare Company present a celebration of our cultural heritage - as seen through the eyes of three trainer-wearing Americans, Tues 14 - Wed 15 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

**ANITA AND ME** Dinnerladies actress Shobna Gulati stars in Tanika Gupta's staging of Meera Syal's much-loved novel, Tues 14 - Sat 18 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**THE BEST THING** A Swinging '60s story of unconditional love, presented by leading full-mask theatre company Vamos, Wed 15 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**THE TEMPEST: FIRST ENCOUNTERS** The RSC presents an edited version of its festive play, an ideal first experience of Shakespeare for anyone aged eight and older, Wed 15 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**NARVIK** A new play with songs which tells the story of a Liverpudlian man and a Norwegian woman who are 'pulled together and torn apart by war, as the events of one summer cause ripples across an ocean of time', Wed 15 - Thurs 16 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury



**DANCING ABOUT ARCHITECTURE** New play by Kay Wootton which centres around a woman and her closest friends as they struggle to figure out the difference between what they need, what they want, and what they get, Thurs 16 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**HEAVEN EYES** Theatre Sans Frontières present a staging of David Almond's gritty story about young people trying to find their way in the world, Thurs 16 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**IN THE MOTHERHOOD** New play by Hayley Pepper which journeys into the world of competitive parenting, Thurs 16 Feb, Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton

**WENDY & PETER PAN** Split Mask Theatre present a modern adaptation

of JM Barrie's classic tale, Thurs 16 - Fri 17 Feb, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

**JANE ENGLISH: 20B** Part autobiography, part oral history, 20B is a moving exploration of what home and community really mean, and how it feels when these things are lost, Fri 17 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**WILDE WITHOUT THE BOY** Gerrard Logan performs a dramatisation of De Profundis, Oscar Wilde's letter to his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, written from his prison cell in Reading Gaol, Fri 17 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**FRANKENSTEIN** Blackeyed Theatre present a brand new version of Mary Shelley's Gothic horror, Fri 17 - Sat 18 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**ROMEO & JULIET** Youth Theatre production of the greatest love story ever told, Fri 17 - Sat 25 Feb, Hall Green Little Theatre, Birmingham

**ALICE IN WONDERLAND** Immersion Theatre present a 'larger-than-life' musical for younger audiences, Sat 18 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**WOLF MEAT** Wildheart & Lyric bring their absurdist humour and compelling storytelling to an irreverent world of dirty deals and mistaken identity, Sat 18 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**NARVIK** A new play with songs which tells the story of a Liverpudlian man and a Norwegian woman who are 'pulled together and torn apart by war, as the events of one summer cause ripples across an ocean of time', Sat 18 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**DUMMY** A two-person comedy improv show featuring Colleen Doyle and Jason Shotts, Sat 18 Feb, Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham

**THE FIZZOGS' SUCK IT AND SEE TOUR** Sat 18 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT... DINOSAURS?** Ben Garrod (the TV scientist in Attenborough And The Giant Dinosaur) uses TV film footage and photos of his own palaeontological dinosaur digs to explain 'everything you ever wanted to know about dinosaurs - and more'... Sat 18 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**STAND BY ME** A celebration of Ben E King and The Drifters, Sun 19 Feb, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT... DINOSAURS?** Ben Garrod (the TV scientist in Attenborough And The Giant Dinosaur) uses TV film footage and photos of his own palaeontological dinosaur digs to explain 'everything you ever wanted to know about dinosaurs - and more'... Sun 19 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ONCE UPON A PILLOW FIGHT** Contemporary circus company Upswing and Stratford Circus Arts Centre present a playful and interactive pop-up acrobatic performance, Sun 19 Feb, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent



BRB Cinderella - Birmingham Hippodrome

## Dance

**CINDERELLA** Birmingham Royal Ballet present David Bintley's enchanting fairytale, with breathtaking designs by John McFarlane, designer of the company's famous Nutcracker production. Wed 15 - Sat 25 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

## Film

**BALLERINA (U)** Animation/Adventure. Featuring the voices of Elle Fanning & Dane DeHaan. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Sat 18 & Tues 21 Feb

**SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS (U)** Family. Starring Kelly Macdonald & Andrew Scott. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 13 Feb

**LIFE, ANIMATED (PG)** Documentary. Starring Jonathan Freeman & Gilbert

Biography/Drama. Starring Julie Andrews & Christopher Plummer. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 14 Feb

**WEST SIDE STORY (PG)** Drama/Musical. Starring Natalie Wood & George Chakiris. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Tues 14 Feb

**WHEN HARRY MET SALLY (15)** Comedy/Romance. Starring Billy Crystal & Meg Ryan. mac, Birmingham, Tues 14 Feb

**COLLATERAL BEAUTY (12a)** Drama. Starring Will Smith & Edward Norton. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Fri 17 Feb

**GOLD (tbc)** Drama/Thriller. Starring Matthew McConaughey & Edgar Ramirez. mac, Birmingham, Fri 17 - Thurs 23 Feb

**JACKIE (15)** Biography/Drama. Starring Natalie Portman & Peter Sarsgaard. Old Market Hall, Fri 17 - Thurs 23 Feb

**THE GOONIES (12)** Adventure/Comedy. Starring Sean Astin & Josh Brolin. mac, Birmingham, Sat 18 Feb

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**3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> MARCH**

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## SEASON HIGHLIGHTS



### **BROMANCE**

SAT 11 FEB, 7.30pm



### **NORTHANGER ABBEY**

MON 13 - WED 15 FEB  
7.30pm, Wed Mat: 2.30pm



### **FRANKENSTEIN**

FRI 17 & SAT 18 FEB, 7.30pm



### **DON'T DRIBBLE ON THE DRAGON**

THUR 23 FEB, 2.30pm



### **PETER ALLISS**

TUES 14 MAR, 7.30pm



### **DING DONG MURDER ME ON HIGH!**

FRI 17 & SAT 18 MAR, 7.30pm



### **INVINCIBLE**

TUE 21 - SAT 25 MAR  
7.30pm, Thurs & Sat Mat: 2.30pm



### **THE TIGER WHO CAME FOR TEA**

WED 10 MAY, 1.30pm & 4.30pm  
THURS 11 MAY, 10.30am & 1.30pm



### **RORY BREMNER**

WED 24 MAY, 7.30pm

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Starring Jean Gabin & Dita Parlo.  
The Electric Cinema, Birmingham,  
Sun 19 Feb

### NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 17 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

**THE FOUNDER (12a)**

**THE GREAT WALL (12a)**

**HIDDEN FIGURES (PG)**

**JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2 (tbc)**

**MOONLIGHT (tbc)**

## Events

**CRAFTPLAY EXPLORERS** Discover, play and create with your child. For children up to the age of five, Tues 14 Feb, Bilston Craft Gallery, Wolverhampton

**TODDLER THURSDAY** Learn, play and explore in sessions for under-fives and their parents or carers, Thurs 16 Feb, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

**VERVE POETRY FESTIVAL** Birmingham's first festival of poetry and spoken word, Thurs 16 - Sun 19 Feb, Birmingham City Centre

**SNOWDROPS OF SHROPSHIRE** A talk by Eddie Roberts, a local galanthophile (a snowdrop expert), Fri 17 Feb, Sunnycroft, Wellington, Shropshire

**WIZARDS ASSEMBLE - THE BIRMINGHAM PUB CRAWL** Dress up in your best Harry Potter attire for a pub crawl around some of the city's best venues, Fri 17 Feb, various venues across Birmingham City Centre

**THE NATIONAL FRANCHISE EXHIBITION** Showcasing a huge range of national franchise opportunities for anyone looking to run their own business, Fri 17 - Sat 18 Feb, NEC, B'ham

**THE 50+ SHOW** Show focusing on four key topics: hobbies & crafts; health; finance & money; travel, Fri 17 - Sat 18 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

**CRAFTPLAY SATURDAY FAMILY STAY-AND-PLAYS** Create, explore and play along with your child using unusual materials. For children up to the age of seven, Sat 18 Feb, Bilston Craft Gallery, Wolverhampton

**STUNTFEST 2017** An afternoon of 'awesome' stunts and displays for all the family, featuring some of the top UK stunt drivers and riders, Sat 18 Feb, Santa Pod Raceway, Northants

**VICTORIAN MURDER-MYSTERY DINNER**



Interview the suspects and try to solve this 'most perplexing mystery' whilst enjoying delicious food in the magnificent surroundings of Aston Hall, Sat 18 Feb, Aston Hall, B'ham

### AN EVENING WITH FRANK BRUNO

Including a four-course dinner, comedian, singer and live entertainment, Sat 18 Feb, The H Suite - Edgbaston, Birmingham

### BIRMINGHAM INDOOR GRAND PRIX 2017

Featuring heroes of the Rio Olympics, Sat 18 Feb, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham



**THE CLASSIC DIRT BIKE SHOW** Explore several halls packed with traders, display bikes and more, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Feb, Telford International Centre, Shropshire

**WILDERNESS SURVIVAL SKILLS** Learn to build dens and light fires in the wilderness, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Feb, Trentham Estate, Stoke-on-Trent

**SNOWDROP TIME** Enjoy a walk through the Dingle and spot the earliest signs of spring, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Feb, Dudmaston Estate, Bridgnorth, South Shropshire

**ANATOMY LAB LIVE** Anatomist Samuel Piri performs a dissection procedure to showcase healthy and diseased internal organs, Sat 18 - Sun 19 Feb, Cattle Bridge Inn, Birmingham

**WASSAILING AND CAMPFIRE COOKING** It's time to wake up the new orchard, so join in wassail each day at 2pm and toast marshmallows over the campfire, Sat 18 - Fri 24 Feb, Moseley Old Hall, Wolverhampton

**EXPLORE BELOW STAIRS** Explore the servants' world, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

**MAKE AND FLY A KITE** Drop-in activity, complete with flight-themed trail around the town, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge, Shropshire

**FEBRUARY HALF TERM AT DRAYTON MANOR** Visit Thomas Land, the 15-acre zoo and much more, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Drayton Manor Theme Park, Staffordshire

**ON THE MOVE** Explore the region's rich transport heritage, from horse power to land speed records, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

**FLIGHT WORKSHOPS** Build a pneumatic rocket from craft materials and find out more about flight, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Enigenuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

**ENCHANTED FOREST WEEK** Wear your best elfin hat or fairy wings and follow the Woodland Walk trail. Use your fairy magic to make some enchanted forest crafts, a Victorian



Flight Workshops - Enigenuity, Shropshire

fairy or an elfin picture, Sat 18 - Sun 26 Feb, Biddulph Grange Garden, Staffordshire

### NELL GWYN: MORE THAN A MISTRESS?

Join costume historian and dress-maker Meridith Towne as she explores the fascinating life of Nell Gwyn, Charles II's favourite and most famous mistress, Sun 19 Feb, The

Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

**SPONGE** Dance company Turned On Its Head takes children on a creative journey featuring lots of family interaction, Sun 19 Feb, mac, B'ham

**DUBFREEZE** The first major VAG event of the VW calendar, Sun 19 Feb, Stafford Bingley Hall

## Lichfield Arts

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<b>FEBRUARY</b>	Saturday 4th Steve "big Man" Clayton & The 44's	<b>Festivals...</b> Lichfield Blues & Jazz Festival 2017 2-4 June
Wednesday 22nd	Community Night	
Saturday 25th	Orange Circus Band	
<b>MARCH</b>	Sunday 12th Craobh Rua	
Friday 24th	Martin Taylor	<b>FUSE FESTIVAL</b> 7-9 July 2017 Beacon Park Lichfield
Sunday 26th	Gigspanner	
<b>APRIL</b>	Saturday 8th The Stumble	
Sunday 9th	Fret and Fiddle	
Friday 14th	Martin Carthy	<b>L2F</b> The Lichfield Festival of Folk 13-15 October 2017
Sunday 23rd	Laurence Jones Band	
Friday 28th	Jaywalkers	
Saturday 29th	Chris Helme	
<b>MAY</b>	Sunday 7th Nancy Kerr and the Sweet Visitor Band	lichfieldarts.org.uk Box office: 01543 262223 Donegal House Bore Street Lichfield Staffordshire WS13 6LU info@lichfieldarts.org.uk
Friday 12th	The Jive Aces	
Saturday 20th	The Jar Family	
Sunday 21st	Little Brother Eli	

### Gigs

**BAND OF HORSES** Mon 20 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**KINGS OF LEON** Mon 20 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

**CELTIC FIDDLE FESTIVAL** featuring Kevin Burke, Mon 20 Feb, New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme

**PAIGE CAKEY** Mon 20 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**FUFANU** Mon 20 Feb, The Flapper, B'ham

**STEPHEN FEARING** Mon 20 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**VNV NATION** Mon 20 Feb, The Asylum, Birmingham

**KENT DUCHAINE** Tues 21 Feb, The Jam House, Birmingham

**DEAF HAVANA** Tues 21 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**TONSTARTSBANDHT** Tues 21 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**THRILLER LIVE** Tues 21 - Sat 25 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**PETE KENT** Wed 22 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**TOUCHÉ AMORÉ** Wed 22 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**WILD NOTHING** Wed 22 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**WILCOX: HULSE - BREEZE & WILSON** Wed 22 Feb, The Red Lion Folk Club, Birmingham

**DRAKE** Wed 22 - Thurs 23 Feb, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**IAN PARKER & HIS BAND** Thurs 23 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**HOPSIN** Thurs 23 Feb, O2 Institute, B'ham

**THE GRAHAMS** Thurs 23 Feb, Henry Tudor



The Grahams - Henry Tudor House

House, Shrewsbury

**TELEMAN** Thurs 23 Feb, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**DAVE SHARP** Thurs 23 Feb, Katie Fitzgerald's, Stourbridge

**DAVE MASON'S TRAFFIC JAM** Thurs 23 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**KARL BLAU** Thurs 23 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**PET SHOP BOYS** Fri 24 Feb, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**BRIT FLOYD** Pink Floyd tribute show, Fri 24 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES** Fri 24 Feb, O2 Institute, Birmingham

**THE SCOPYONS** Fri 24 Feb, The Roadhouse, Birmingham

**THE X FACTOR LIVE TOUR 2017** Fri 24 Feb, Genting Arena, Birmingham

**THE BLOCKHEADS** Fri 24 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**KNOXVILLE HIGHWAY** Fri 24 Feb, Forest Arts Centre, Walsall

**DAN PAGE** Fri 24 Feb, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**IDEAL CLUB** Fri 24 Feb, The Sunflower Lounge, Birmingham

**SUM 41** Fri 24 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BARBARA DICKSON** Fri 24 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**SOUL LEGENDS** Fri 24 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**MIKE & THE MECHANICS** Sat 25 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**KEVIN ROWLAND DJ SET WITH THE ATLANTIC PLAYERS** Sat 25 - Sun 26 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**REACH OUT TO MOTOWN**

a celebration of 50 years of Motown, Sat 25 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**KAISER CHIEFS** Sat 25 Feb, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**PINEGROVE** Sat 25 Feb, The Rainbow Venues, Birmingham

**ETERNAL FEAR** Sat 25 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**CAMERON FORREST** Sat 25 Feb, Havana Republic Bar and Restaurant, Shrewsbury

**MIC RIGHTEOUS** Sat 25 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**BOXSTOCK - CIGAR BOX GUITAR FESTIVAL** Sat 25 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**THE ORANGE CIRCUS BAND** Sat 25 Feb, Lichfield Guildhall

**JOE & ASHANTI** Sat 25 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**SIMMERDOWN LOUNGE** Sat 25 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**JIM MORAY** Sat 25 Feb, The Hive, Shrewsbury

**THE BORN AGAIN BEATLES** Sun 26 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**OYE SANTANA** Sun 26 Feb, The Robin, Bilston

**ANDY FAIRWEATHER LOW AND THE LOW RIDERS** Sun 26 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**BOWIE EXPERIENCE** Sun 26 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**ONE NIGHT IN NASHVILLE** Sun 26 Feb, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**SIOBHAN MILLER** Sun 26 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

**ANGEL** Sun 26 Feb, O2 Academy, Birmingham

**JIM MORAY** Sun 26 Feb, Kitchen Garden Cafe, Birmingham

**RUMOURS OF FLEETWOOD MAC** Mon 27 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**MIKE AND THE MECHANICS** Mon 27 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

**RYAN HAMILTON** Tues 28 Feb, Hare & Hounds, Birmingham

### Classical Music

**HARMONIE BAND** Featuring Geddy Stringer & Joshua Monks (conductors), Mon 20 Feb, The Bramall, Birmingham

**JUAN DIEGO FLÓREZ** Featuring Juan Diego Flórez (tenor) & Vincenzo Scalerà (piano). Programme includes works by Rossini, Mozart, Puccini, Massenet & Verdi, Tues 21 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham



**AN AUDIENCE WITH LESLEY GARRETT** Tues 21 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Telford

**ORCHESTRA OF THE SWAN: MOZART MEETS JOANNA LEE** Featuring Victoria Brawn (harp), Sally Harrop (clarinet), Phillip Brookes (bassoon), Frances Moore-Bridger (horn) & David Curtis (conductor). Programme includes works by Mozart, Joanna Lee & Haydn, Wed 22 Feb, Birmingham Town Hall

**THE HEATH QUARTET** Programme includes works by Haydn, Bartok & Mendelssohn, Wed 22 Feb, The Barber Institute, Birmingham

**CBSO PRE-CONCERT SHOWCASE: SOLO PIANO** Featuring Pascal Pascalev & Andrey Ivanov. Programme includes works by Scriabin (Pascalev) & Brahms (Ivanov), Wed 22 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BEETHOVEN AND SCHUMANN** Featuring Aleksandar Markovi (conductor), Hisako Kawamura (piano) & the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Programme includes works by Janáček, Beethoven & Schumann, Wed 22 Feb, Symphony Hall, B'ham

**PETER DONOHOE PLAYS CHOPIN** Thurs 23 Feb, The Bramall, The University of Birmingham

**LELAND CHEN AND JOHN LENEHAN** Programme comprises the Beethoven Kreutzer Sonata and the violin sonata of César Franck, Sat 25 Feb, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire

**CBSO YOUTH ORCHESTRA: VAUGHAN WILLIAMS' SECOND** Featuring Jamie Phillips (conductor), Steven Osborne (piano) & the CBSO Youth Orchestra. Programme includes works by Kidane, Britten & Vaughan Williams, Sun 26 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**LUNCHTIME ORGAN CONCERT WITH THOMAS TROTTER** Programme includes works by D. Buxtehude, J.S Bach, Hindemith, Judith Weir & Dukas, Mon 27 Feb, Symphony Hall, Birmingham

**BARTOSZ GLOWACKI (CLASSICAL ACCORDIAN) & ROBERT LUFT (ELECTRIC GUITAR): WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE.** Programme

includes works by Scarlatti, Sofia, Gubaidulini, JS Bach & Arvo Pärt, Mon 27 Feb, The Lion Hotel, Shrewsbury

**ELSABÉ RAATH IN CONCERT** Also featuring Robert Markham (piano). Programme includes works by Brahms, Hindemith & Enescu, Tues 28 Feb, Birmingham Conservatoire

### Comedy Gigs

**TOADALLY FREE COMEDY!** Mon 20 Feb, The Blue Orange Theatre, B'ham

**FAT PENGUIN COMEDY** Wed 22 Feb, The Patrick Kavanagh, Birmingham

**RUDI LICKWOOD, IAN SMITH & COMEDY CAROUSEL WITH ANDY ROBINSON** Thurs 23 Feb, The Glee Club, B'ham

**RICHARD HERRING** Thurs 23 Feb, The Old Rep, Birmingham

**ANDY ZALTZMAN** Fri 24 Feb, The Slade Rooms, Wolverhampton

**INGRID DAHLE & DAVID JORDAN** Fri 24 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**ROB DEERING, DALISO CHAPONDA, NICK PAGE & WAYNE BEESE** Fri 24 Feb, The Lamp Tavern, Dudley

**THE NOISE NEXT DOOR, GEOFF NORCOTT, KANE BROWN & COMIC TBC** Fri 24 Feb, The Comedy Loft, B'ham

**RUDI LICKWOOD, IAN SMITH, JONNY PELHAM & COMIC TBC** Fri 24 - Sat 25 Feb, The Glee Club, Birmingham

**MICKEY SHARMA, MARK NELSON & MICKY BARTLETT** Fri 24 - Sat 25 Feb, Jongleurs, Birmingham

**ROGER SWIFT, PHIL PAGGETT, HARV HAWKINS, MOSES ALI KHAN, LOVDEV BARPAGA & MASAI GRAHAM** Sat 25 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**ROFL COMEDY CLUB** Sat 25 Feb, The Old Post Office, Burton-upon-Trent

**COMEDY IN THE MET** Sat 25 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**THE LAUGHING SOLE COMEDY FOR KIDS** Sun 26 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**KEN DODD** Sun 26 Feb, Prince Of Wales Centre, Cannock

**JACK WHITEHALL** Sun 26 Feb, Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham

**SEAN LOCK** Mon 27 - Tues 28 Feb, Birmingham Hippodrome

**ROB BECKETT** Tues 28 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Shropshire



## Theatre

**MORGAN & WEST'S UTTERLY SPIFFING SPECTACULAR MAGIC SHOW FOR KIDS AND CHILDISH GROWN-UPS** Fun for all as Morgan & West mix brainbusting illusion and good old-fashioned tomfoolery, Mon 20 Feb, mac, B'ham

**BORN OFFENDERS** The Young REP Seniors imagine a world were you can be criminal from birth, and where the only thing you've done wrong is be born, Mon 20 - Tues 21 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

**CIRQUE BERSERK!** An evening of thrills and skills, combining contemporary cirque-style artistry with adrenaline-fuelled stunt action. Featuring over 30 jugglers, acrobats, aerialists, dancers, drummers and death-defying stuntmen, Mon 20 - Sun 26 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

**A JUDGEMENT IN STONE** A brand new staging of Ruth Rendell's classic thriller, Mon 20 - Sat 25 Feb, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

**OLIVER!** Amateur production presented by M3 Studios, Tues 21 - Thurs 23 Feb, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

**THRILLER LIVE** Musical celebration featuring the hit songs of Michael and The Jackson 5, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Feb, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre



**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST** Amateur production presented by MD Amdrams, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Feb, Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, North Shropshire

**ALL THE LITTLE LIGHTS** Award-winning new play telling the story of three girls slipping through the cracks in society, Wed 22 - Sat 25 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

**MORGAN & WEST'S UTTERLY SPIFFING SPECTACULAR MAGIC SHOW FOR KIDS AND CHILDISH GROWN-UPS** Fun for all as Morgan & West mix brainbusting illusion and good old-fashioned tomfoolery, Thurs 23 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**CHRISTIAN LEE: POP!** Magic, mirth and mayhem with the Britain's Got Talent 2016 semi-finalist, who's been described as 'Mr Bean meets Charlie Chaplin', Thurs 23 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**SOME GUYS HAVE ALL THE LUCK: THE ROD STEWART STORY** New theatrical production celebrating the career of one of rock's greatest icons, Rod Stewart - from street busker through to international superstar! Thur 23 Feb, Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent

**SINGIN' IN THE RAIN** Amateur produc-

tion presented by the Viv Kelly Youth Theatre Group, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**CLOSER** Staging of Patrick Marber's exploration of modern relationships. Age guidance is 16-plus, due to scenes of a sexual nature and strong language, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Feb, Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham

**DAVID WALLIAMS' THE FIRST HIPPO ON THE MOON** Les Petits present 'a fantastical adventure' featuring puppetry, music, mayhem and a giant space race to the moon... Fri 24 Feb, Stourbridge Town Hall

**CIRCUS OF HORRORS - THE NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE** An amalgamation of bizarre, brave and beautiful acts, woven into an Alice In Horrorland-type story, driven by a mainly original soundscape and performed with a forked tongue firmly in each cheek! Fri 24 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

**SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT... DINOSAURS?** Ben Garrod (the TV scientist in Attenborough And The Giant Dinosaur) uses TV film footage and photos of his own palaeontological dinosaur digs to explain 'everything you ever wanted to know about dinosaurs - and more'... Fri 24 Feb, Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

**AMÉDÉE** British playwright, director and comedian Sean Foley (The Play What I Wrote, The Ladykillers) brings Eugene Ionesco's surreal comedy to life in a new adaptation. Roxana Silbert directs... Fri 24 Feb - Sat 11 Mar, The REP, Birmingham

**JACK FROST** Jack Frost is brought to life through puppetry, live music and 'enchanted storytelling', Sat 25 Feb, The Place, Oakengates Theatre, Shropshire

**MY NAME IS... & THIS IS NOT LONDON** Double bill of new writing. The stories of refugees across the world are reimagined, and the concept of social security questioned, Sat 25 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**WOBBLY WORDS** One-man play by the renowned education department at the New Vic Theatre. This performance is suitable for children aged 3-plus, Sat 25 Feb, Darwin Shopping Centre, Shrewsbury at 10.30am & The Hive, Shrewsbury at 1.30pm

**THE JUNGLE BOOK** Oddssocks bring their inimitable humour to Rudyard Kipling's empowering story, Sat 25 Feb, Lichfield Garrick

**THE WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION** The Crescent Theatre Company presents its version of Agatha Christie's most celebrated courtroom drama, Sat 25 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham

**I TOLD MY MUM I WAS GOING ON AN R.E. TRIP** A 20 Stories High and Contact co-production about young women and abortion, Mon 27 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**SISTER ACT** Alexandra Burke takes the lead in Craig Revel Horwood's staging of the much-acclaimed musical comedy, Mon 27 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, Wolverhampton Grand Theatre

**MACBETH** The Nonentities present an



Morgan & West - mac, Birmingham & Stafford Gatehouse Theatre

amateur staging of Shakespeare's bloodiest play, Mon 27 Feb - Sat 4 Mar, Rose Theatre, Kidderminster

tunes and sparkly costumes, Fri 24 Feb, Victoria Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

## Dance

**NATIONAL DANCE COMPANY WALES** A triple bill of new work: Profundis, Tuplet and The Green House, Tues 21 Feb, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

**JAMES WILTON DANCE: LEVIATHAN** A cast of seven use choreographer James Wilton's trademark blend of athletic dance, martial arts, capoeira and partner work to re-imagine Herman Melville's seminal novel, Moby Dick, Fri 24 Feb, mac, Birmingham

**ANTON & ERIN** Brand new show blending smart choreography, sassy

## Film

### INDEPENDENT LISTINGS:

**FINDING DORY (U)** Animation/Adventure. With the voices of Ellen DeGeneres & Albert Brooks. Artrix, Bromsgrove, Mon 20 Feb; Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Wed 22 Feb

**MOANA (PG)** Animation/Adventure. Featuring the voices of Auli'i Cravalho & Dwayne Johnson. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Mon 20 - Tues 21 Feb; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 20 - Wed 22 Feb



Anton & Erin - Victoria Hall, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

### THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN (15)

Drama/Mystery. Starring Emily Blunt & Haley Bennett. Stourbridge Town Hall, Mon 20 Feb

### JASON BOURNE (12a) Action/Thriller.

Starring Matt Damon & Tommy Lee Jones. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 20 Feb

### MANCHESTER BY THE SEA (15) Drama.

Starring Casey Affleck & Kyle Chandler. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 20, Wed 22, Fri 24 & Sat 25 Feb

### LITTLE MEN (15) Drama/Family.

Starring Greg Kinnear & Jennifer Ehle. Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Tues 21 Feb

### BALLERINA (U) Animation/Adventure.

Featuring the voices of Elle Fanning & Dane DeHaan. Festival Drayton Centre, Market Drayton, Shropshire, Tues 21 Feb; Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Thurs 23 - Sat 25 Feb

### CALAMITY JANE (U) Comedy/Musical.

Starring Doris Day & Howard Keel. Mitchell Arts Centre, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 21 Feb

### THE JUNGLE BOOK (PG)

Adventure/Drama. Starring Neel Sethi, with the voices of Bill Murray & Ben Kingsley. mac, Birmingham, Tues 21 - Wed 22 Feb

### MUM'S LIST (12) Drama.

Starring Rafe Spall & Emilia Fox. mac, Birmingham, Tues 21 & Thurs 23 Feb

### ME BEFORE YOU (12) Drama/Romance.

Starring Emilia Clarke & Sam Claflin. Forest Arts Centre, Walsall, Thurs 23 Feb

### TOP CAT BEGINS (U) Animation/Family.

With the voices of Jason Harris & Ben Diskin. mac, Birmingham, Thurs 23 Feb

### KUNG FU PANDA 3 (PG)

Animation/Action. With the voices of Jack Black & Angelina Jolie. mac, Birmingham, Fri 24 Feb

### PASSENGERS (12a) Adventure/Drama.

Starring Jennifer Lawrence & Chris Pratt. Wem Town Hall, North Shropshire, Fri 24 & Tues 28 Feb

### LION (PG) Drama.

Starring Rooney Mara, Nicole Kidman & Dev Patel. Old Market Hall, Shrewsbury, Fri 24 - Tues 28 Feb

### HELL OR HIGH WATER (15)

Crime/Drama. Starring Ben Foster & Chris Pine. Edge Arts Centre, Much Wenlock, South Shropshire, Mon 27 Feb

### A MONSTER CALLS (12a)

Drama/Fantasy. Starring Sigourney Weaver & Felicity Jones. Ludlow Assembly Rooms, South Shropshire, Mon 27 Feb

### JULIETA (15) Drama/Romance.

Starring Emma Suárez & Adriana Ugarte. Foreign language, subtitles. Foxlowe Arts Centre, Leek, Staffs, Tues 28 Feb

### NEW FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE:

Released from Fri 24 Feb, showing at selected cinemas

### HACKSAW RIDGE (tbc)

### DENIAL (12a)

### RULES DON'T APPLY (tbc)

### SING (U)

### THE WHITE KING (12a)

## Events

### FEBRUARY HALF-TERM FUN

Including arts and crafts, bug hunting and story trails, Mon 20 - Fri 24 Feb, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

### MAKE A GLIDER IN ENGINUITY'S FAB LAB

Create gliders from plastic using the 3D printer and vinyl cutter to make stick-on decals, Mon 20 - Fri 24 Feb, Enginuity Museum, Ironbridge, Shropshire

### AIRFIX MAKE AND TAKE

Featuring models both for seasoned model makers and those new to Airfix, Mon 20 - Fri 24 Feb, RAF Cosford, Shropshire

### CASTLE QUEST

Featuring a series of characters and clues, Mon 20 - Sun 26 Feb, Tamworth Castle

### HALF-TERM CRAFT: ANIMAL POM POMS WORKSHOP

Learn how to make pom poms and turn them into animals, Tues 21 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

### BUILD A BIRD BOX WORKSHOP

Give nature a helping hand and make a bird house for our feathered friends, Tues 21 Feb, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

### ALL THAT GLITTERS KIDS WORKSHOP

Make your own treasured piece of jewellery from old junk and recycled materials, Tues 21 Feb, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

### FLIGHT THEMES DROP-IN CERAMIC WORKSHOPS

Sculpt a flying creature from air-drying clay, Tues 21 - Thurs 23 Feb, Coalport China Museum, nr Ironbridge, Shropshire

### FEBRUARY HALF-TERM ACTIVITIES

Take a 45-minute heritage boat trip and get creative with the wintry weather-themed craft activities, Tues 21 - Fri 24 Feb, Dudley Canal Tunnel and Limestone Mines

### HALF-TERM POTTERY PAINTING

Paint a piece of pottery to take home, Tues 21 - Sat 25 Feb, Gladstone Pottery Museum, Stoke-on-Trent

### CARAVAN, CAMPING AND MOTORHOME SHOW 2017

Featuring tents and compact campervans, luxurious motorhomes and caravans, Tues 21 - Sun 26 Feb, NEC, Birmingham

### STOP MOTION WORKSHOP - MYSTICAL BEASTS

Make mystical and magical beasts from scratch and use them to create a stop animation film, Wed 22

Feb, Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton-upon-Trent

### GET GEOCACHING

Explore Attingham as you hunt for hidden geocaches around the grounds, Wed 22 Feb, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

### STORYTELLING AT BLAKESLEY HALL

Storytelling for three to eight-year-olds. Join in with A Squash And A Squeeze, a fun-filled rhyming tale by the author of The Gruffalo, Wed 22 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

### THE V-BOMBERS AND AIRFIX - KITS AND THE COLD WAR

Airfix researcher Simon Owen gives a free talk on the different ways the V-bombers, kitted by Airfix, were developed, and how Cold War aircraft have shaped the brand and the world, Wed 22 Feb, RAF Cosford, Shropshire

### BIRD WATCHING FOR BEGINNERS:

GETTING READY FOR SPRING Find out what to look and listen out for in springtime, and how to identify different bird species, Wed 22 Feb, Carding Mill Valley & The Shropshire Hills

### HALF-TERM CRAFT: ANIMAL MASKS WORKSHOP

Create your own animal masks as part of Blakesley Hall's animal-themed half term, Thurs 23 Feb, Blakesley Hall, Birmingham

### WIZARDS ASSEMBLE - THE BIRMINGHAM PUB CRAWL

Dress up in your best Harry Potter attire for a pub crawl around some of the city's best venues, Fri 24 Feb, various venues across Birmingham City Centre

### CREATIVE BADGES WORKSHOP

Make your own badges using the museum badge-making machine, Fri 24 Feb, Museum of the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham

### 999 EMERGENCY DAY

Does your youngster love playing pretend police? Are they a fan of Fireman Sam? Emergency vehicles will be on display outside the museum, with hands-on activities taking place throughout the day, Fri 24 Feb, Soho House, Birmingham

### RACE RETRO

Diverse motorsport event featuring 'stunning displays, high-octane live action' and the chance to drive a classic car around a specially designed route, Fri 24 - Sun 26 Feb, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth

### BACKSTAGE TOUR: FAMILY

Discover the rarely seen backstage areas of the theatre, as The REP invites you to be an audience member, a set builder, a prosthetics maker or an assistant stage manager, Sat 25 Feb, The REP, Birmingham

### ODYSSEIA THE PARASAUROLOPHUS

Meet Captain Jon Voyage and his beautiful dinosaur, Odysseia the Parasaurolaphus. Help the captain as he attempts to return Odysseia to the land that time forgot, Sat 25 Feb, The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

### THE GUITAR SHOW

Perfect for guitar enthusiasts, with live performers on stage and a wide range of exhibitors in attendance, Sat 25 - Sun 26 Feb, New Bingley Hall, Birmingham

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11 February, 8pm

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[www.mattforde.com](http://www.mattforde.com)



**JOSIE LONG**  
17 February, 7:30pm

New York Times Critics' Pick  
*'One of the finest stand-ups on the circuit' The Telegraph*  
\*\*\*\* The Times  
\*\*\*\* The Guardian

[www.josielong.com](http://www.josielong.com)



**RICHARD HERRING**  
23 February, 8pm

*'Best comedian of his generation' GQ*  
*'A gloriously infantile delight in mischief, provocation and inspired rudeness' The Guardian*

[www.richardherring.com](http://www.richardherring.com)

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What's On

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SAT 25 FEB, 7.30PM  
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Includes live entertainment and a basket meal.  
Tickets: £24.95

**St Patrick's Day Celebration**  
Friday 17th March  
Includes live entertainment and a 4 course Irish themed meal.  
Tickets: £24.95

**SO'S Retro Night**  
Friday 30th June  
Includes live entertainment and a basket meal.  
Tickets: £18.95

**FUN & FOOD FESTIVAL**  
Friday 8th - Sunday 10th September  
Tickets: £5 per adult, £1 per child (under 3s go free)

**COMEDY NIGHT**  
Friday 3rd November  
Includes live entertainment and a basket meal.  
Tickets: £19.95

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